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Near East & South Asia

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29 December 1994

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-94-250 *29 December 1994*

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Egyptian, Jordanian, Israeli Officers To Meet

TA2812140994 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 28 Dec 94 p 5

[Report by Hemi Shalev]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The first tripartite meeting of its kind will take place next week in the Elat area when Egyptian, Jordanian, and Israeli army officers hold discussions on regional security .

The discussions will start on Wednesday [4 January] and last two days. Liaison officers from the three armies will discuss routine cooperation on security issues along the borders in the Taba-Elat-al-'Aqabah area and also hold a preliminary discussion on the necessary arrangements for opening the borders. [passage omitted]

Arab-Israeli Talks

'Arafat Says Deal on Autonomy Council 'Close'

NC2812171994 Paris AFP in English 1339 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Dec 28 (AFP)—Israel and the PLO are close to sealing an accord on elections to a Palestinian autonomy council but its size is still in dispute, PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat said Wednesday [28 December].

"Most of the issues connected with the election process for the autonomy council have been settled. Only one point remains to be finalised: the number of council members," 'Arafat told the Egyptian weekly AL-MUSSAWAR.

"This will be tackled at my next meeting with (Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaqw Rabin," he said.

Last week Israel and the PLO agreed that further talks on an Israeli army redeployment away from urban centres on the West Bank would be held between 'Arafat and Rabin.

Under the PLO-Israeli Declaration of Principles on autonomy signed in Washington in September 1993, Israel is to redeploy its troops ahead of Palestinian elections, which were originally set for July.

Negotiations in Cairo on extending Palestinian self-rule have been suspended since December 16.

Israel has been increasingly reluctant to commit itself to a West Bank redeployment following the killings of 45 Israelis since the launch of self-rule in May.

Peres Asked To Set Up Palestinian Affairs Department

TA2412133994 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Leading Palestinian official Nabil Sha'th has requested from Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres that Israel set up a department for Palestinian affairs in the Foreign Ministry to deal with the autonomy. He said Peres welcomed the suggestion.

Last night, Sha'th met Police Minister Moshe Shahal in Haifa and agreed they would visit Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons. The first visit will be to Palestinian women in Tel Mond jail.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab 'Mini-Summit' Convenes in Alexandria

Invitees, Agenda Noted

NC2812114494 Paris AFP in English 1115 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Alexandria, Egypt, Dec 28 (AFP)—Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad arrived in this northern Egyptian city on Wednesday [28 December] for a summit with several Arab leaders.

Al-Asad was greeted by his Egyptian counterpart Husni Mubarak. Neither leader made a statement before making their way to al-Muntazah palace.

Saudi Arabia's King Fahd and Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi were also to take part in the Alexandria summit later Wednesday at the invitation of Mubarak.

An Egyptian official, asking not to be named, said it would be "a very important meeting" of several leaders. But he declined to give an agenda or specify the number of participants.

The Arab League's secretary general, 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, was also to take part in the Arab mini-summit.

Egyptian Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said the summit would group Mubarak, King Fahd and Al-Asad. But he made no mention of al-Qadhdhafi, despite an earlier report from Egypt's news agency MENA that the Libyan leader would also attend.

In Riyadh, meanwhile, a Saudi official said al-Asad himself called for the Alexandria meeting to complain that Arab states were moving too fast toward normalization with Israel.

"Syria is unhappy with the normalization process between Israel and several Arab countries at a time when there is no progress in the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese negotiations," the official told AFP.

"Syria believes that this Israeli-Arab normalization considerably weakens the position of Syria in the negotiations with Israel," he said, asking not to be named.

On Monday, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin visited Oman, becoming the first Israeli head of government to travel to a Gulf Arab state.

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Damascus Said Seeking To Discuss Iraq

JN2812181994 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] A member of the Syrian delegation attending the Alexandria summit, who refused to reveal his name, has stated that his country wishes to achieve an inter-Arab reconciliation because keeping the status quo with Iraq weakens the Arabs. Therefore, he said, Damascus had asked for holding the Alexandria summit quickly.

That statement, which was immediately translated into a Syrian desire to see Iraq reassuming its Arab role and position, especially after its recognition of Kuwait, and after Iraq was described by the recent Gulf states summit in Manama as the "Republic of Iraq" and not "the Iraqi regime" as had become customary, and after the Gulf summit did not call for maintaining the sanctions on Iraq. All this, as well as a step not familiar in mini Arab summits—to invite Arab League Secretary General 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid to attend the Alexandria summit—prompted many people to stress that the three leaders are discussing a unified position on Iraq that would end the state of siege imposed on it, and, consequently, allow it to resume its Arab role.

A western diplomat in Cairo said Damascus feels that if the Arab homeland regains its solidarity, Syria will be in a position of strength in its negotiations with Israel, while at the moment it feels it is standing alone.

Saudi sources had said that President al-Asad proposed the three-party summit, currently being held in Alexandria, to discuss the current Arab conditions, the Middle East peace process, and the developments in the region resulting from the normalization of relations between certain Arab states and Israel. These Saudi sources feel that Syria is complaining about the contacts certain Arab states are holding with Israel and the attempts to normalize relations with it before achieving progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of negotiations. The sources say that Syria feels these acts weaken its negotiating position with Israel.

Egyptian Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif, however, said that President Mubarak proposed that the summit discuss Arab issues and coordinate efforts toward them in order to clear the Arab atmosphere and achieve Arab solidarity on the Arab, regional, and international arenas.

A member of the [Syrian] delegation attending the summit said that Syria seeks to proceed toward a stronger and more cohesive Arab nation.

A European diplomat said the Alexandria mini-summit is like a rejectionist front. He noted that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's visit to Oman aroused the fears of Arab leaders.

Regardless of the reasons for holding this summit, the eyes of observers are focused on its results and the decisions it will yield.

King Fahd Arrives, Met by Mubarak

NC2812154794 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1444 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Alexandria, 28 Dec (MENA)—Saudi King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, arrived at al-Nuzhah Airport in Alexandria this afternoon.

President Muhammad Husni Mubarak headed those receiving King Fahd upon his arrival.

King Fahd is being accompanied on his trip by a delegation including Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal; Prince 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin-Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, counselor at the Royal Court; Mr. Ibrahim al-'Anqari, special adviser to King Fahd; Mr. Muhammad Bin-'Abd-al-Rahman al-Shaykh, chief of the royal protocol; and Saudi Ambassador in Cairo As'ad Abu-al-Nasr.

Mubarak Holds Talks With Fahd

NC2812170194 Cairo MENA in English 1617 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Alexandria, Dec 28 (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak and visiting King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia today held a meeting at the latter's residential headquarters here.

Minister of Information Safwat al-Sharif and Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, along with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal attended the meeting.

A trilateral meeting is to be held later this evening that includes President Mubarak, King Fahd, and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, who arrived here earlier.

The foreign ministers of the three Arab countries are also scheduled to meet later this evening.

Mubarak, King Fahd, al-Asad Begin Talks

NC2812201994 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1905 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A few minutes ago, our colleague Muhammad Zayd dispatched this report on the meetings of the Arab mini-summit in Alexandria.

[Begin Zayd recording] Ladies and gentlemen, I salute you from al-Muntazah Palace in Alexandria where the tripartite mini-summit started among President Husni Mubarak, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. [passage omitted]

Some predications have been made about this mini-summit and those participating in it, such as whether it will be a five way, quadripartite, or tripartite meeting, and whether any other leaders will participate in it. At any rate, the summit which has just started in Alexandria has been described as important. It is meeting at the request of President Husni Mubarak.

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The minisummit has been described by some media as secretive regarding its topics and timing. That is why there was a flurry of Egyptian diplomatic activity which took great pains to prepare for this summit. Circumstances lurking on the horizons of the Arab and international arenas were the reason for convening this minisummit.

Today, I noticed the presence of Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, who attended the receptions for both King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad upon their arrival in Alexandria. This leads me to deduce that discussions about the Arab League and its role will occupy a large part of the summit talks. In addition, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid believes that this summit could be a natural and preliminary introduction to the convening of a comprehensive Arab summit, which would not have much chance of success if were held now.

Among the issues floating around this summit is the question of whether the peace process in the Middle East will progress after peace treaties have been signed between Jordan and the Palestinians on the one side, and Israel on the other. But, the Syrian and Lebanese tracks have still made no progress and we notice delays and complications in both of them. The stands of Egypt and Saudi Arabia are identical regarding the need to activate the two tracks and reach a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region. [end recording]

Foreign Ministers Meet on Sidelines

NC2812210394 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2032 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Alexandria, 28 Dec (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' held a three-way meeting this evening on the sidelines of the tripartite Arab summit.

'Amr Musa said that the results of their discussions will be submitted to the three Arab leaders during their summit, which was due to begin in Alexandria at 2200 [2000 GMT] today. He pointed out that all issues connected with the Arab region will be discussed during the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi summit.

Syrian Foreign Minister al-Shar' stated that during his talks with his Egyptian and Saudi counterparts they discussed the peace process, the reasons behind its current stagnation, and Israel's lack of commitment to the pertinent UN Security Council resolutions.

He added that the issues raised at the ministerial meeting will be submitted to the tripartite summit. He said that the summit will review the Arab situation, ways of improving it, and the means of revitalizing the Arab League's role.

Asked to comment on the haste with which some Arab countries have normalized their relations with Israel, al-Shar' remarked: We are very dismayed by these steps. They will only encourage Israel to become more intransigent.

Commenting on Iraq's current attitudes, al-Shar' pointed out that Iraq's stance has improved and it has implemented some UN Security Council resolutions but not others.

Mubarak, al-Asad Hold Private Meeting

NC2812214694 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad began a private round of talks at Alexandria's al-Muntazah Palace this evening.

'Mini-Summit' Goes Into Second Day

NC2912103194 Paris AFP in English 0915 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Alexandria, Egypt, Dec 29 (AFP) - The leaders of Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia were to resume summit talks here at midday (1000 GMT) Thursday [29 December] after a meeting of foreign ministers from the three countries, officials said.

Presidents Hafiz al-Asad of Syria and Husni Mubarak of Egypt and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia held a three-hour meeting overnight Wednesday, a Saudi delegation member said.

Officials said the foreign ministers would prepare a final communique for the summit, which was convened to bolster inter-Arab ties, the role of the Arab League and the position of Syria in peace talks with Israel.

Egyptian newspapers said Cairo had been preparing the summit for over a month.

A source close to the Syrian delegation told AFP that Damascus "is counting enormously on King Fahd not to normalise his relations with Israel prior to the completion of negotiations between Syria and the Jewish state."

The talks come just two days after Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin travelled to Oman, becoming the first Israeli head of government to visit a Gulf Arab state.

Foreign Ministers Prepare Communique

NC2912105494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1025 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Alexandria, 29 Dec (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal met in the Filastin Hotel in Alexandria today. Dr. Usamah al-Baz, the Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, attended the meeting.

The conferees are scheduled to prepare a joint communique to be released on the outcome of the tripartite

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summit meetings. The ministers will report the results of their talks to the summit session due to be held at 1300 [1100 GMT] today. Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid will attend the meeting.

Egypt's al-Sharif Terms Talks 'Positive'

NC2912121594 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1135 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Alexandria, 29 Dec (MENA)—[Egyptian] Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif has described the tripartite Arab summit talks in Alexandria between President Husni Mubarak, Saudi King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad as positive. He said the summit conference is expected to end today with a joint communique.

In a statement today, al-Sharif said the custodian of the two holy mosques and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad will leave Alexandria after the summit later today.

A communique is scheduled to be released this evening following the tripartite summit's final session.

Palestinian Affairs

'Abd-al-Rahim Comments on Emergency Cabinet Meeting

JN2812175194 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1515 GMT 28 Dec 94

[Telephone interview with PA Scretary General al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, in Gaza, by Yusuf al-Qazzaz—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Qazzaz] Mr. al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the Palestinian National Authority [PNA; Palestinian Authority, PA], good evening. What will the PNA Council of Ministers discuss at its emergency meeting this evening?

['Abd-al-Rahim] It was decided to hold a PNA Council of Ministers emergency meeting this evening, at 1900, to discuss the expansion of settlements and settlement activities in the occupied territories in the West Bank. This was decided after it became clear to us that there is collusion between the settlers and the Israeli Army, and that the Israeli government observes silence on these activities. This shows that there are intentions to escalate this activity to prejudice the status of the land before any negotiations are held on a final solution. At its meeting last Sunday, the Palestinian government condemned these settlement activities and the frenzied settlement campaign in the occupied territories. The cabinet sent brother Sa'ib 'Urayqat to these areas to get a first-hand look. You all saw brother Minister Sa'ib 'Urayqat confronting the settlement activities there.

The PA does not agree to these settlement activities, particularly that the Israeli Government claims that these are disputed territories and are public property. If these are disputed territories and public property, this does not mean that the settlers have a right to establish settlements on them. These territories are public property that will be owned by the Palestinian government under the final solution.

Unfortunately, the Israeli Labor Party issues contradictory statements. Once, it says it has given orders to suspend these activities. This implies that the Israeli government is behind these activities. At other times, it says it is waiting for a ruling by the Israeli government's legal adviser next Sunday. But, the machinery and equipment used to expand these settlements are still there, as some of the brothers there told us. There is still the intention to pursue the expansion of the Efrat settlement if the inhabitants withdraw from there.

[Al-Qazzaz] Do you intend to address the cosponsors of the peace process to brief them on the Israeli violations, particularly in the settlement field?

['Abd-al-Rahim] Yes. Brother President Yasir 'Arafat summoned the Russian charge d'affaires yesterday and told him about this, about the gravity of the situation, and how this frenzied settlement drive can undermine the situation and lead to a setback in the political process. The brother president met today with the U.S. consul-general in Jerusalem and told him the same thing. The brother president yesterday also summoned the consuls of western countries in Jerusalem. He met today with the Egyptian ambassador, and before him he met the Norwegian ambassador. This is what the government had agreed at its previous meeting, that is, to inform the cosponsors of the peace conference, the European countries, and Norway and Egypt, given that they are involved in this issue. We conveyed our messages to the concerned parties and told them that this situation is rejected, that neither the Palestinian people nor the PA can accept it, and that this violates the Oslo agreement, and the Declaration of Principles [DOP]. The Labor Party here contradicts itself. It now resorts to the same method the Likud had used. Shim'on Peres announced that the Israeli foreign minister [as heard] who, according to news agencies, is against this frenzied settlement campaign, announced some time ago that the Likud has placed them in this critical situation. Therefore, the Israeli government, which can take measures, must now suspend these settlement activities. By suspending them, we will be reassured that Israel abides by the DOP on the ground. If it does not stop them, this means that the DOP is just ink on paper and that Israel takes the measures that are in line with its plan to prejudice the status of the land in the final solution.

[Al-Qazzaz] Mr. al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the PNA, thank you.

Further on 'Abd-al-Rahim Remarks

JN2912080394 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian National Authority [PNA] Council of Ministers held an emergency meeting last night under the chairmanship of

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summit meetings. The ministers will report the results of their talks to the summit session due to be held at 1300 [1100 GMT] today. Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid will attend the meeting.

Egypt's al-Sharif Terms Talks 'Positive'

NC2912121594 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1135 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Alexandria, 29 Dec (MENA)—[Egyptian] Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif has described the tripartite Arab summit talks in Alexandria between President Husni Mubarak, Saudi King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad as positive. He said the summit conference is expected to end today with a joint communique.

In a statement today, al-Sharif said the custodian of the two holy mosques and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad will leave Alexandria after the summit later today.

A communique is scheduled to be released this evening following the tripartite summit's final session.

Palestinian Affairs

'Abd-al-Rahim Comments on Emergency Cabinet Meeting

JN2812175194 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1515 GMT 28 Dec 94

[Telephone interview with PA Scretary General al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, in Gaza, by Yusuf al-Qazzaz—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Qazzaz] Mr. al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the Palestinian National Authority [PNA; Palestinian Authority, PA], good evening. What will the PNA Council of Ministers discuss at its emergency meeting this evening?

['Abd-al-Rahim] It was decided to hold a PNA Council of Ministers emergency meeting this evening, at 1900, to discuss the expansion of settlements and settlement activities in the occupied territories in the West Bank. This was decided after it became clear to us that there is collusion between the settlers and the Israeli Army, and that the Israeli government observes silence on these activities. This shows that there are intentions to escalate this activity to prejudice the status of the land before any negotiations are held on a final solution. At its meeting last Sunday, the Palestinian government condemned these settlement activities and the frenzied settlement campaign in the occupied territories. The cabinet sent brother Sa'ib 'Urayqat to these areas to get a first-hand look. You all saw brother Minister Sa'ib 'Urayqat confronting the settlement activities there.

The PA does not agree to these settlement activities, particularly that the Israeli Government claims that these are disputed territories and are public property. If these are disputed territories and public property, this does not mean that the settlers have a right to establish settlements on them. These territories are public property that will be owned by the Palestinian government under the final solution.

Unfortunately, the Israeli Labor Party issues contradictory statements. Once, it says it has given orders to suspend these activities. This implies that the Israeli government is behind these activities. At other times, it says it is waiting for a ruling by the Israeli government's legal adviser next Sunday. But, the machinery and equipment used to expand these settlements are still there, as some of the brothers there told us. There is still the intention to pursue the expansion of the Efrat settlement if the inhabitants withdraw from there.

[Al-Qazzaz] Do you intend to address the cosponsors of the peace process to brief them on the Israeli violations, particularly in the settlement field?

['Abd-al-Rahim] Yes. Brother President Yasir 'Arafat summoned the Russian charge d'affaires yesterday and told him about this, about the gravity of the situation, and how this frenzied settlement drive can undermine the situation and lead to a setback in the political process. The brother president met today with the U.S. consul-general in Jerusalem and told him the same thing. The brother president yesterday also summoned the consuls of western countries in Jerusalem. He met today with the Egyptian ambassador, and before him he met the Norwegian ambassador. This is what the government had agreed at its previous meeting, that is, to inform the cosponsors of the peace conference, the European countries, and Norway and Egypt, given that they are involved in this issue. We conveyed our messages to the concerned parties and told them that this situation is rejected, that neither the Palestinian people nor the PA can accept it, and that this violates the Oslo agreement, and the Declaration of Principles [DOP]. The Labor Party here contradicts itself. It now resorts to the same method the Likud had used. Shim'on Peres announced that the Israeli foreign minister [as heard] who, according to news agencies, is against this frenzied settlement campaign, announced some time ago that the Likud has placed them in this critical situation. Therefore, the Israeli government, which can take measures, must now suspend these settlement activities. By suspending them, we will be reassured that Israel abides by the DOP on the ground. If it does not stop them, this means that the DOP is just ink on paper and that Israel takes the measures that are in line with its plan to prejudice the status of the land in the final solution.

[Al-Qazzaz] Mr. al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the PNA, thank you.

Further on 'Abd-al-Rahim Remarks

JN2912080394 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian National Authority [PNA] Council of Ministers held an emergency meeting last night under the chairmanship of

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President Yasir 'Arafat to follow up the current developments in settlement activities in the West Bank, particularly in the areas surrounding holy Jerusalem, al-Khidr, Shu'fat, Bayt Hanina, and Biddu, as well as in Hebron, al-Birah, Nabulus, Bethlehem, and throughout the West Bank.

Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the PNA, said in a statement that in its assessment of this serious topic the PNA Council of Ministers has reviewed the contacts the Israeli foreign minister held with President 'Arafat and the other contacts held with other Israeli officials. He said: The PNA council dwelt on the popular Palestinian stand, rejecting and bravely confronting this settlement activity, which constitutes a blatant violation of the peace process and the Palestinian-Israeli accord that calls for not encroaching on the final status issues.

'Abd-al-Rahim noted that the Council of Ministers reiterates its strong rejection of the attempts aimed at imposing a fait accompli through blatant violations, including the decisions related to our institutions in Jerusalem.

President 'Arafat briefed the members of the Council on the contacts he held with the representatives of the cosponsors, the European countries, Norway, and sisterly Egypt. He also briefed the council on the contacts he held with Palestinian citizens from the West Bank, Gaza, and abroad who expressed their strong protest against the serious settlement violations in all areas and the illegal decisions regarding Jerusalem.

'Abd-al-Rahim said: As the PNA Council of Ministers shoulders the responsibility of the peace process on the Palestinian track on behalf of the PLO, it renews its categorical rejection of these serious violations. The Council of Ministers announces to our heroic people, who have declared a mobilization and formed committees for defending their lands, its determination to face these violations. Within this context, the Council of Ministers calls on the Israeli Government to stop settlement activities and expansion. It also strongly refuses to consider this issue a legal one, but one that needs a clear political decision in accordance with the text and contents of the Declaration of Principles and the international pledges and resolutions to stop settlement activities.

The Council of Ministers also appealed to the cosponsors of the peace process—the United States and the Russian Federation—along with sisterly Egypt, Norway, the European Union, and the United Nations to intervene to stop this policy that endangers the entire peace process.

Talks With Israelis To Continue Despite Crisis

JN2912092994 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat has said that the PLO will resort to all possible methods, including the UN Security Council, to stop Israeli settlements in the occupied territory.

Official sources in the Palestinian National Authority said the talks with Israel will continue despite the current crisis resulting from Israeli settlement expansion.

Al-Khidr Residents Appeal to High Court on Efrat

TA2912084894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The residents of al-Khidr, near Efrat, have appealed to the High Court of Justice against the continuation of work on Giv'at Tamar. The residents are asking the court to revoke the seizure order issued 14 years ago. They claim that the appeal board's decision to reject their claim of ownership of the land is not the end of the matter. The residents claim they have had possession of and have been cultivating the land without encountering any opposition from any side.

Our legal affairs correspondent Mira Amsalem reports that the appellants are seeking an interim order against the continuation of work on the site. They claim that every activity carried out in the area impinges on their ownership rights. They further claim that the work in the area will prevent their village from developing, arguing that while their population continues to grow, the Jewish settlements are encircling the village.

Al-Husayni: Ruling on Jerusalem Contravenes Oslo

MM2812170094 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 27 Dec 94 pp 1, 4

[Report by Ilyas Nasrallah: "Al-Husayni Stresses That Rabin Has Two Options: Orient House or Hamas; Israeli Knesset Bans PLO Activities in Jerusalem"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London—Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem portfolio in the [Palestinian] national self-rule authority, has announced that he is continuing to perform his activities in Orient House "just as we did both before and after the Oslo accord, namely as a part of the Palestinian team."

He said that the bill banning PLO activities in Jerusalem which was approved by the Israeli parliament (Knesset) yesterday [26 December] contravenes the Oslo accord. Because under the accord, no party is entitled to take any steps likely to affect the outcome of the negotiations scheduled to be held over Jerusalem.

AL-Husayni said: "The Palestinian people see two roads in front of them: one they call Orient House, the PLO's headquarters in Jerusalem, and one they call Hamas. So if Israel rejects Orient House, it means that it is choosing the Hamas road."

This is the first Palestinian reaction to the Israeli bill which was voted for overwhelmingly. AL-Husayni told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT over the telephone from

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Rabat, where he is on a brief visit to Morocco: "That decision does not mean Jerusalem alone, but the peace process as a whole. Jerusalem could become the warm sun of the Middle East, but it could also become a black hole capable of swallowing bodies much bigger than it, including the peace process." [passage omitted]

AL-Husayni said: "Under the accord, Israel has no right to prevent Palestinian institutions from performing activities they performed openly both before and after the Oslo accord. So we view this bill as a clear violation of the Oslo accord."

Al-Husayni expressed his belief that the Israelis could try to change their way of dealing with him and with Orient House. However, he said: "Our existence is a reality and did not arise from an Israeli law. So it will continue."

Al-Husayni went on: "We in Orient House represent an umbrella for the peace process [as a whole], not just part of it. And the negotiations over the transitional phase are still continuing. They are not over the national self-rule authority. They are broader." [passage omitted]

'Arafat, Saudi Deputy Premier Discuss Jerusalem

JN2812185994 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1730 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] A telephone contact took place this evening between President Yasir 'Arafat, PLO Executive Committee chairman and head of the Palestinian National Authority, and Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi minister of defense and 2d deputy prime minister. The discussion dealt with Jerusalem.

The Saudi minister reiterated Saudi Arabia's stand in support of the Palestinian cause in general, and the Jerusalem cause in particular.

President Yasir 'Arafat praised Saudi Arabia's stand in support of the Palestinian people and their just cause.

Hamas Leader al-Zahar Warns West on 'Terrorism'

BR2812160494 Rome L'UNITA in Italian 28 Dec 94 p 5

[Interview with Mahmud al-Zahar, Hamas leader in Gaza, by Umberto De Giovannangeli; place and date not given: "Terrorism Not Madness but Act of Love"—first paragraph is L'UNITA introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] "The West prefers to diabolize Islamic radicalism, dismissing it all as the action of a gang of fanatics that understand only the language of force. But this is not so: Behind every suicide bomber who decides to sacrifice his own life for a higher ideal, there are hundreds of youngsters willing to follow his example. Islam does not exalt sacrifice as an end in itself, but expects every Muslim to be entirely obedient to Allah's teachings. This, because the answer lies in Islam." This was said by Mahmud al-Zahar, leader of the Hamas fundamentalist movement on the Gaza Strip. The young Palestinian blown up on Christmas Day in Jerusalem in the failed attack on the bus station was a Hamas member. "The West is to blame for the innumerable injustices that mark the Middle East. Until it revises its policy it cannot consider itself safe."

[De Giovannangeli] The hijacking of the French airbus by an Algerian fundamentalist commando, and the failed massacre in Jerusalem on Christmas Day, responsibility for which was claimed by 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, Hamas' armed wing: What is behind this latest escalation of terror?

[Al-Zahar] In Algeria the military used force to prevent the Islamic fundamentalists from governing after they won the elections. In Palestine we are still living under Israeli military occupation. The main thing behind the Islamic armed struggle is the desire to counter the usurpers.

[De Giovannangeli] Several young kamikazes who carried out attacks in Israel and the territories belonged to Hamas. What drives them to such extremes?

[Al-Zahar] There is the awareness of the exemplary value of that extreme act, an act of love toward their own people. I am well aware that in the West those youngsters are considered madmen, but no Western journalist has ever looked at their lives: If they had done so they would have discovered a background of bullying, friends or relatives killed or imprisoned by the Israelis; they would have discovered intolerable living conditions, that were certainly not created by Islam. It is ridiculous to blame an "Iranian conspiracy": It is enough to see the poverty-stricken outskirts of Algiers or the refugee camps in Gaza to understand the factors that nurture the strength of the Islamic resistance movement. A Muslim does not fear death, but neither does he seek it: The Koran exalts the value of life. If hundreds of youngsters in Palestine, Egypt, or Algeria are willing to martyr themselves, it is because they believe that it is the only way open to them to assert their viewpoint: When they have placed their trust in elections, as in Algeria, they have been criminalized; and when they thought they could engage in dialogue with Israel they received an appearance of freedom in exchange.

[De Giovannangeli] But what is the political point of massacring civilians?

[Al-Zahar] The moral outrage is always one-sided: In Algeria hundreds of people are killed by the military every week because they are suspected of cooperating with the Islamic Salvation Front or the GIA [Islamic Armed Group]; and in the occupied territories the Israeli troops had no hesitation in shooting women and children who were throwing stones and demanding freedom: No Western head of state or government felt the duty to protest this state terrorism. Just a few days ago the Israelis placed a car bomb in a neighborhood of Beirut close to a supermarket: Children were playing in that

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street and women were out doing their shopping. It was only by chance that that explosion did not cause a massacre. But no Western government condemned that criminal action, just as nobody expressed outrage when a Jihad leader was blown up by a bomb that Mosad placed in Gaza.

[De Giovannangeli] Western objectives have been targeted by Islamic fundamentalism—aircraft, embassies, diplomatic staff, clerics.

[Al-Zahar] The West bears great responsibilities for the accumulation of injustices that oppress the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa: Without Western support, the corrupt regimes that oppress their peoples would have been swept away within a few months. Until it revises its position, the West cannot consider itself safe. The response to the demands expressed by the Islamic movements cannot be repression: The sooner the West realizes this fact, the better it will be for everyone.

[De Giovannangeli] Does the business with the French airbus mean the advent of a new tide of hijackings?

[Al-Zahar] I do not think so: At least, this is not Hamas' intention. The use of force must be measured against the objectives that it is intended to achieve and the impact that certain actions can have on the international public: The hijacking of an aircraft is counterproductive from every viewpoint.

[De Giovannangeli] The GIA in Algeria, Hamas in the territories, and the Hizballah in Lebanon: Many people are talking in terms of an "internationalization" of Islamic terrorism.

[Al-Zahar] There are links, but each movement is jealous of its autonomy. I am well aware that some people accuse us of being merely gunmen in the service of Tehran or Damascus. But Hamas' strength lies in the popular support that it enjoys in Palestine, in the support for our watchwords, our defense of the Palestinian people's national rights and of their Islamic identity. If we were just an isolated bunch of lunatics we would already have been eliminated. But behind the strength of radical Islam there lies the dissatisfaction of millions of people who feel betrayed by the West and by the corrupt regimes that have squandered every kind of wealth and credibility by governing against the people.

Hamas: Police Conducting Searches for Arms

TA2912053694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Senior figures of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in the Gaza Strip say that the Palestinian police have begun searching the houses of Hamas members for weapons and ammunition. They claim that, so far, no weapons have been confiscated and that ammunition was found in a number of places.

The Hamas leaders were taking part in the memorial service for the Palestinian policeman who carried out the suicide bomb attack in Jerusalem on Sunday. At the memorial, Shaykh Mahmud al-Zahhar, a Hamas leader, said the organization would never lay down arms. He said the Palestinian Authority would be crossing a red line by attempting to disarm Hamas and that the consequences would be severe. At the service, the Hamas activists burned the Israeli flag and fired in the air.

Alliance Urges Gulf 'Masses' To Reject Normalization

JN2812194894 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 28 Dec 94

[Statement issued by the Alliance of Palestinian Forces; place and date not given—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq] Rabin's visit to Muscat and meeting with Sultan Qabus in Oman reflects the extent to which some Arab regimes are breathlessly eager to climb on the U.S.-Zionist bandwagon at the expense of the entire Arab nation's objectives and interests. This visit constitutes a dangerous step on the path of normalization and capitulation to the Zionist Middle Eastern onslaught. It comes at a time when the Oslo-Cairo and Jordanian royal treaty precedents with their humiliating concessions are facing a deep impasse. Meanwhile, the region is witnessing a tangible awakening by the nationalist forces opposed to capitulation and normalization with the Zionist entity. In this context, our Arab homeland is witnessing a growing, organized popular anti-normalization and anti-capitulation movement. Meanwhile, the Syrian and Lebanese tracks are witnessing firmness and insistence on the principles of national and pan-Arab rights, especially Zionist withdrawal from all occupied territories.

The Alliance of Palestinian Forces urges the masses of sisterly Oman and the masses of Arab Gulf to resist their regimes' disregard for the Arab nation's rights and submission to the Washington-Tel Aviv orders, and to reject all current forms of normalization between their sultans and the government of the Zionist enemy. The alliance also urges all nationalist forces in our homeland to display further cohesion and cooperation to counter those dangers by building a broad Arab front to resist capitulation and normalization and to ensure the Palestinian people's legitimate rights to liberation, repatriation, and full independence.

PFLP-GC 'Source' Denounces Rabin's Oman Visit

JN2812202894 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 28 Dec 94

[Statement issued by a PFLP-GC "responsible source" on "the visit made by terrorist Yitzhaq Rabin, the head

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of the Zionist enemy government, to the Sultanate of Oman"; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] 1. The visit did not come as a surprise. It was the natural result of the general state of Arab deterioration and the Gulf states' pursuit of the capitulationist trend. The position of Sultan Qabus and his well-known agencies on the political, economic, and cultural normalization is well known. That official government trend coincides with the trend of domestic repression and terrorism against the Omani national movement and against the popular discontent in the entire Arab region.

2. The visit is clear and tangible evidence of the extent of the secret and public contacts between the Zionist enemy and the oil shaykhs. These contacts resulted in several meetings among political officials from both sides and similar economic meetings that took the form of joint ventures and multifaceted deals.

3. The visit is a flagrant promotion of the Zionist economic strategy that was launched in the economic development conference, held recently in Morocco. It also constitutes a first step toward a Middle East economic market that guarantees the Zionist economy's supreme interests in the Arab region and leaves the region's market under the well-known Zionist banking hegemony.

4. The visit constitutes a serious Zionist attempt to strike public deals and treaties with Sultan Qabus which will pave the way for similar deals with the oil shaykhdoms, and which will come in response to the Gulf Cooperation Council member states' position to lift the boycott and establish major projects in gas, oil, and other byproducts. It is fruitless to say that the visit did not result in any political movement, as Rabin claimed after leaving Oman. The next few days will bring more news of separate agreements similar to the Oslo and Wadi al-'Arabah agreements.

5. Rabin's visit to Oman is a stab against the general popular Palestinian position, and against the position of the intifadah and the tempestuous popular resistance all over the homeland.

6. The visit is also a stab against, and a betrayal of the official and popular Arab position that rejects the U.S. and Zionist moves to impose fait accompli reconciliations on our Arab nation. That position is represented by the Syrian-Lebanese-Palestinian position that struggles to foil the major conspiracy against Palestine and the Arab and Islamic nations.

Rabin's visit to Qabus with the approach of the new year exemplifies the extent of the Omani sultan's desire to join the general Zionist strategy and the extent of his contribution to the promotion of the course of the U.S.-Zionist aggression, usurpation, and hegemony.

Despite that, we are fully confident that the people of Oman will resist their rulers and that the Gulf oil islands will, with the will of God, be the gate to start the fire of revolution against the Jews and the rulers who represent the Zionist fingers in the entire Arab and Islamic region.

Revolution until the liberation of land and man.

[Signed] The PFLP-GC [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command]

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Algeria

GIA Claims Responsibility for Clerics' Murder

NC2912074694 Paris AFP in English 0725 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Dec 29 (AFP)—Algeria's radical Armed Islamic Group (GIA) has claimed responsibility for the revenge murder of four European priests in eastern Algeria after four GIA hijackers of an Air France jet were killed by French special forces.

In a statement published Thursday [29 December] by the London-based daily AL-HAYAH, sold in Beirut, GIA leader Abou 'Abd-al-Rahman Amin said the four priests—three Frenchmen and one Belgian—had been gunned down Tuesday in "retaliation for the death of four GIA members."

The four GIA members had hijacked the Air France Airbus from Algiers to Marseille, southern France, executing three passengers before being themselves killed during an assault on the plane by French special forces in Marseille Monday.

"One of our groups carried out a military operation on Tuesday in Tizi Ouzou," the eastern Algerian town where the four members of the White Fathers order were killed, the statement said.

Amin added that his forces were "carrying on with the extermination of Christian crusaders."

The GIA would "continue the struggle against anyone who opposes the establishment of God's law and the Islamic caliphate."

One of six gunmen who killed the four European priests has been identified and is being actively sought, Algerian security officials said Wednesday. Officials gave his name as Mourad Khelil, alias Abou Youcef, 27, from Tizi Ouzou.

Algerian press reports said Wednesday the six gunmen probably intended to kidnap the priests.

Attaf Comments on Hijacking, Penal Code

LD2812210694 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 28 Dec 94

[Report on news conference by government spokesman Ahmed Attaf by correspondent Farida Belkacem at the Foreign Ministry in Algiers on 28 December -recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmed Attaf, secretary of state for Maghreb affairs and official government spokesman, held a news conference today at the Foreign Ministry, which was attended by the national press. Our colleague Farida Belkacem represented ENTV:

[Belkacem] Mr. Ahmed Attaf answered many questions, but the subject on which journalists asked the most questions was the hijacked French airliner. Regarding the halting of air and sea trips between Algeria and France, the official government spokesman said: We have been in negotiations with the French authorities since yesterday to see how can we develop ways to protect the trips. In reply to another question about the way in which the four hijackers were able to get on board the airliner with weapons, Mr. Attaf said that the security measures at the airport were strict, especially after the August 1992 tragedy. However, there were lapses which will be revealed by the investigation, which is under way. Regarding the resumption of the national dialogue between the authority and the parties, Mr. Attaf reaffirmed that the dialogue was still open, and that the presidential election would be pluralistic and would embrace all political parties. Regarding acts of violence, Mr. Attaf said that the doors are being slammed shut one after another in the face of terrorism, whether in the Arab world or in the European capitals. There is also a complete program for the protection of the vital installations in the country.

At the news conference, Algerian TV presented three questions. The first question is about the issue of the French plane which was surrounded by great sensation. Would you assess the event?

[Attaf] Regarding your first question on my assessment of the hijacking of the French plane carrying passengers who were taken hostage, I would like to recall a number of axioms. The first one is that this tragedy was a common tragedy between Algeria and France. France was concerned because the plane was a French one and on board were French nationals. For its part, Algeria was concerned because it happened on our national soil and because of the presence of Algerian nationals aboard this plane.

The second axiom is that because this tragedy was a common tragedy between Algeria and France, continuous consultation between the Algerian and French authorities was necessary.

The third axiom is that Algeria adopted a clear stance—to protect the lives of the innocent. In the tragic history of acts of aggression on civil aviation this—the protection of the lives of the innocent—has always been taken into consideration by the states of the world when incidents similar to this recent one took place. Much has been said and facts were much falsified with regard to this operation. It was said that Algeria yielded to external pressures in its dealing with this crisis. Some were bold enough to say that Algeria had accepted the assistance of the French state in solving this crisis by way of the arrival on our soil of French security elements. Some went further and said that those French security elements were in Boufarik.

I would like to say that in dealing with this crisis Algeria never yielded to any foreign pressure, and that Algeria and the Algerian people are known to be extremely sensitive when it comes to national sovereignty.

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Second, I would also like to state in this appraisal that all decisions were taken by the Algerian authorities and Algerian authorities alone. Even regarding the permission for the airliner to take off: When we became sure that France was going to accept the airliner and after we alone took the decision to allow the airliner to take off, the head of state ordered the competent Algerian authorities to give permission to the airliner to take off.

[Belkacem] The previous Council of Ministers approved three important legislative bills concering the revision of the criminal procedural code, the penal code, and the draft bill of compassion measures. Can you, Mr. Attaf, give some clarifications about that?

[Attaf] As regards the laws or the draft laws relating to the judicial sector, I would like to say the following: These bills have come as a result of a general and comprehensive assessment of the state of this sector. The first bill, according to which the special councils will be dissolved, is a draft text aimed primarily at normalizing the Algerian judicial sector. Its second aim is to unify the Algerian judiciary.

All of the information on combating terrorism and all of the procedures and measures concerning the combating of terrorism have been amalgamated into the Criminal Procedures Law. As for the second bill, which concerns the amendment to the Penal Code, it also aims at the standardization and normalization of the judicial procedures. There are also punishments here relating to terrorism which were in the presidential decree on combating terrorism issued in 1993. All of these measures have been included in the Penal Code. New penalties have been added relating to acts of subversion; this is something new in the code. As for the draft order concerning the clemency measures, this draft came as an embodiment of the appeal addressed by the head of state on 31 October on occasion of the celebration of the 40th anniversary of our liberation revolution. At that time the head of state appealed to our sons who have been duped and deceived and led into activities of subversion instead of remaining on the path of in the field of construction.

According to this draft law, this decree, the chance will be given to a section of our society to come back and rejoin this society that aspires to grow and rejects violence and sabotage.

[Announcer] The head of the state ordered the setting up of a national committee to prepare for the elections. At what stage has the preparation process reached?

[Attaf] A third question regarding the elections preparations. During the last ministerial council, an overall assessment of the preparation process for the presidential elections was made. I would like to give you our assessment for this preparation process: We are satisfied, very satisfied, with this process, whether the issue concerns organizational fields, such as legal texts, or the financial field in preparation for this elections.

To implement what has been decided, the president decided to set up a national committee under the chairmanship of the prime minister. This committee will be formed and will be entrusted with the general agenda of elections preparation.

As you know, the president has set the month of June as the latest date to conclude these preparations. Considering the preparations that have already been completed for the presidential elections, I can say to you today that we will be ready at the set date.

President Ben Bella Questioned on Hijacking

LD2812233094 Paris TF-1 Television Network in French 1900 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Announcer Dominique Bromberger] With us live from Geneva now is former Algerian President Ahmed Ben Bella, who currently heads the Algerian Democratic Movement. Ahmed Ben Bella has spoken out in favor of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] Islamists participating in the government.

Good Evening Mr. Ben Bella.

[Ben Bella] Good Evening.

[Bromberger] I would like to know first of all if you condemn this hijacking yourself?

[Ben Bella] In any case, I disapprove of such practices, but I might perhaps mention that the first hijacking of a plane was the one that affected me—it was carried out by your government, you might remember—then afterward others followed. [passage omitted]

I disapprove of acts of violence in general, but in Algeria we spend our time disapproving of each act of violence without tackling the basic problem, which is that of the situation, that of a different kind of violence that is not expressed in such a spectacular way, which is rampant, which exists, and itself gives rise to this kind of action.

[Bromberger] Mr. Ben Bella, do you believe that the French authorities could have acted differently in this matter?

[Ben Bella] Look, first of all I would have preferred this event take place on our territory. Let me remind you that this action was carried out first of all in Algeria, and I do not understand why in the end it was considered necessary for it to be settled elsewhere. There is a question of sovereignty involved here. I am in contact with my country and Algerians were offended by the fact that this matter was not settled on the spot in Algeria.

[Bromberger] Yes, but apparently things ended with as little damage as possible for the hostages in France, and the French Government was greatly concerned about the way in which an assault might have been carried out in Algeria. Is that something that you can understand?

[Ben Bella] Look, I really cannot understand it, I really do not understand why an action on this scale, of such

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seriousness, which originally took place in our country, was not settled in Algeria. [passage omitted]

[Bromberger] Do you believe that there is now a risk of terrorist reprisal on French territory?

[Ben Bella] Look, I cannot attempt to predict what might happen in France. I note that there is an escalation of events, a serious escalation. I must say that France is being perceived in Algeria in general, not just by the Islamic Front, as a country whose actions do not favor the settlement of this serious problem in our country. There is no possible solution apart from dialogue, nor can the regime at this stage—and we have had experience of this in our country—settle a political problem by the use of force [bras seculier], nor can the Islamic groups or the Islamic currents that are in confrontation with the regime settle the political problem by means of the eradication of the system. There is a time for war and a time for peace. We have to sit together around a table. [passage omitted]

[Bromberger] Thank you very much Mr. Ben Bella.

[Ben Bella] You are welcome.

FFS Leader Addresses 'Terrorist' Acts

LD2812214194 Paris France-2 Television Network in French 1900 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday evening the Algerian Foreign Ministry described the murder of the four White Fathers as a vile terrorist act.

I propose that we now listen to the reaction of one of the main leaders of the Algerian opposition in exile, FFS [Socialist Forces Front] leader Hocine Ait Ahmed, interviewed from Geneva by Philippe Rochot, on this new tragedy and on the business of the Airbus hijacking, which will leave deep marks on French-Algerian relations:

[Begin recording] [Ahmed] We find ourselves caught in a logic of confrontation, and everything that has happened during the last three years has proved that there is an infernal spiral involving unlimited violence, which even affects women, children, and ecclesiastics. We have seen the shooting in Marrakesh, and now the business of the Airbus—a real internationalization is taking shape, and personally I never wished for this internationalization to occur.

[Rochot] How do you feel about the fact that in the end France brought the Airbus here to settle the problem? Is the war that is taking place in Algeria now being imported into France, in your opinion?

[Ahmed] Look, let us not indulge in a play on words. I should be tempted to say that the fact that for certain French Government sectors the only possible policy is eradication of the Islamists gives me the impression that considerations of French internal policy and presidential election considerations have been exported to Algeria.

[Rochot] But the Islamists have, nevertheless, won a victory, because they have opened up a breach between France and Algeria, one might say.

[Ahmed] Look, what is happening...[pauses] won a victory... [pauses] The fact is that there has been an attempt to exploit this event to propel the eradicators in Algeria and the eradicators in France into a conspiracy with one another so that no peaceful solution, no democratic solution to the crisis is achieved in Algeria.

[Rochot] Your party was in favor of the release of the Islamists—is that still possible today, and is dialogue with the Islamists still possible?

[Ahmed] Look, I believe that the real challenge facing everyone today is to compel the proponents of violence to no longer hold the Algerian people hostage. That is the major problem. It is a problem of a power struggle between a regime that does not want to go, which is using all possible methods of violence to maintain itself in power, and the armed Islamist groups who want to take power by force. The vast majority of the Algerian people do not want to support either of them. [end recording]

Merbah Movement To Take Part in Elections

LD2812172794 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Abdelkader Merbah, secretary general of the Movement for Justice and Development, said that his movement would take part in the presidential elections announced by President Liamine Zeroual in his address on 31 October.

Merbah said at a news conference today that presidential elections represented a step for validating legitimacy.

'Confidential Report' Published on Death Toll

LD2912102994 Paris Radio France International in French 0630 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] It is difficult to envisage any sort of dialogue given the number of victims already caused by that war [in Algeria]—that dare not say its name—victims counted by the thousand, as is known. We even know the details, thanks to a confidential report published this morning by the daily LE PARISIEN. Assane Diop:

[Diop] Yes, the French daily LE PARISIEN says it has based the sinister toll of victims that it has published on a report by the Algerian Army general staff. The figures published reveal that there really is a civil war—a reality that the Algerian officers nevertheless continue to deny.

In all, 38,500 civilians were killed between last January and October. The town of Blida, the stronghold of the Islamists, east of Algiers, paid the highest price, with the killing of 12,700 civilians, LE PARISIEN says today.

The article in the French daily is accompanied by a table enumerating the losses by the armed Islamists and those

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of the security forces, also over the first 10 months of the year. There were reportedly 7,297 Islamists killed and 2,733 dead among the security forces.

By adding up the total number of victims, we get close to the thousand killed per week in Algeria, an average that has been put forward by most observers.

There were also more than 1,700 desertions between January and June 1994 in units assigned to the anti-Islamist struggle. It is known that some deserters defect to join the Islamists.

According to LE PARISIEN, material losses since the start of the conflict in Algeria in 1992 are estimated at 9.5 billion French francs.

Egypt

Mubarak Interviewed on International Affairs

NC2812152094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1330 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 28 Dec (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has described Egypt's relations with the Damascus Declaration states as very good, adding that the signatories are proceeding on the right course toward further integration and solidarity to preserve the Gulf region's security.

In an interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-WATAN published today, Mubarak remarked that relations between Egypt and Kuwait are solid, affirming that Egypt cannot take a bystander's position if Kuwait is threatened regardless of whether the Damascus Declaration exists or not.

He pointed out that Egypt dealt with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on the basis of its commitment to the rules of fraternity and good relations, as well as the joint Arab defense pact.

The president said that Egypt sent troops to Kuwait because it was the right thing to do, regardless of the burden, cost, gains, or losses involved and the risks.

In his interview with AL-WATAN, the president said: I sympathize with the Iraqi people. After all, they are Arabs and we should find a way to help them emerge from their difficult situation. He affirmed that it is not our responsibility to depose or choose a ruler because this is the sole responsibility of the Iraqi people and not of any other state. The president noted that he was against General Norman Schwarzkopf's, the commander of the U.S. forces during the war to liberate Kuwait, plan to enter Baghdad with his troops. He explained that he said to former President George Bush: "Don't do that; it would be a black mark." I told him that I would voice my objection and condemn the operation if he did, Mubarak said.

Mubarak described the Iraqi recognition of the Kuwaiti borders as a step in the right direction. However, he said that the difficult issue that still divides Arabs is that an Arab committed aggression against his neighbor. Arab ranks will continue to suffer from discord until the wounds heal, Mubarak said.

Asked if Arab reconciliation is contemplated at present, the president replied that the Iraqi invasion left a very deep wound. I do not expect the atmosphere to clear up and the wounds to heal quickly, he said, noting that efforts are being exerted with brother Arabs in all directions and that the matter needs time.

President Mubarak added that Arabs had their say and their status in the past. After what happened, we have failed to agree on a specific view, he said. He noted that foreign troops arrived in the region quickly when Saddam made his recent moves for fear of any rash action.

Asked about the possibility of holding an Arab summit, President Mubarak replied: How can such a summit be held when there is no common ground? The stage must be prepared for the summit to achieve its goals. Unless this happens, the summit will be turned into a forum for exchanged assaults and we will suffer from further discord and disarray, he said.

The president expressed his regret, since this situation harms not only the Arab world but the Islamic world as well. He pointed out that when he delivered his speech at the recent Islamic summit, Sudan said that we were talking about it when we mentioned states that foster terrorism. He affirmed that this was a wrong conclusion, since "it is unreasonable for me to attend an Islamic summit to attack Sudan."

Touching on the Middle East peace process, Mubarak said that there has been some progress, although it has been slow. He expressed his belief that both Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin are serious in their quest for peace and that an agreement will be reached next year.

Answering a question on what lies behind the campaign some U.S. newspapers have waged against Egypt, President Mubarak said: I do not give this matter any importance and I do not wish to react hastily to things that are published. I could appear on television and respond to all that is being said about our international and regional relations and everything that harms our interests. I could expose this campaign and challenge anyone who says things against Egypt to produce evidence to back up what he says.

President Husni Mubarak described Egyptian-U.S. relations as good. He said that if some U.S. newspapers are applying pressure to serve the interests of others, then we should be patient. The truth will soon emerge and become public sooner or later. However, I do not like to escalate matters.

Asked whether this campaign is linked to the issue of Israeli nuclear weapons and the need for Israel to sign the

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Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, President Mubarak clarified that he was the first person to call for the Middle East region to be free of nuclear weapons. He affirmed Egypt's rejection of everything that goes against its policies and national interests.

He said that there is no meaning or logic behind our letting one country in the Middle East establish peace with its neighbors while its nuclear power continues to grow. This same right, however, is not accorded the other countries in the region.

On implementing the Security Council resolutions on Libya, President Husni Mubarak said: We are monitoring the borders very closely out of our concern to foil any attempt to violate these resolutions. He confirmed that Egypt is implementing the Security Council resolutions.

President Mubarak clarified that there are changes that have taken place in Libyan policy. Libya has announced its rejection of and opposition to terrorism. An example of this was the fact that it made the terrorist Carlos leave on the very same plane that he arrived on.

The president went on to discuss relations between Egypt and Sudan. He clarified that every Sudanese regime that suffers from an internal crisis resurrects the problem of Hala'ib despite the fact that there is no problem. We used to let Sudanese citizens travel to the region with no problems or hindrances, Mubarak added. He pointed out in this regard that there are over 4 million Sudanese citizens who live in Egypt and enjoy every freedom; and despite the disputes with the Sudanese regime, we have not harmed any Sudanese citizens living in Egypt, Mubarak said.

President Mubarak added: We have no problems with Sudan, but they create problems for us. In this regard, he noted that when al-Bashir was in Libya attending the celebrations of the 1 September revolution, al-Qadhdhafi called Mubarak and said that al-Bashir had announced that he would stop the anti-Egyptian media campaigns. Mubarak said: I told the brother colonel to wait until evening. And in fact, that same evening, Sudanese television rained abuse on Egypt with absolutely no limit.

Asked about the implications of Egypt's joining the Arab Maghreb Union, President Mubarak said: We do not join one council in order to antagonize another. We were very careful when we joined the Arab Cooperation Council; I was even against the idea at the beginning, but I later agreed out of a desire to further consolidate Arab ties. He added that Egypt assumed a different stand after the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and when the council members were indulging Iraq. We stood with righteousness in opposition to the Council, he said.

Responding to a question, President Mubarak affirmed that Egypt is trying to help Syria and Israel surmount their lack of mutual confidence.

Asked about his visit to Israel, Mubarak said that the Israelis have made an issue out of his refraining from visiting Israel. Is it obligatory for me to visit Israel, he asked, affirming that he has no fears about or sensitivities over such a visit. What concerns me is peace and progress in the peace process, he said.

Responding to a question, Mubarak pointed out that Egypt has gone a long way with the IMF and bound itself to implement all its agreements concerning privatization and other matters.

In the interview, Mubarak affirmed that the Egyptian economy has become stronger. We are eager to proceed in a balanced manner in order to preserve the citizens' interests.

He stated that the private sector's share in the Gross National Product has reached 50 percent, compared to 10 percent in 1982.

Replying to a question on the tourism situation in Egypt and the impact of terrorist operations on it, the president remarked that tourism is much better now. No matter how small or limited, any terrorist act affects not only Egypt but all states that suffer from this phenomenon, he said.

Asked whether a dialogue with terrorist groups would be useful, the president said: We have engaged in dialogues with them several times, but they use Islam as a front to strike at the national interests. They took our dialogue with them as a sign of weakness and committed more terrorism.

The president explained that most terrorist group members know nothing about true Islam and that some of them commit sins and do evil things. He said that they receive funds from abroad to carry out their terrorist schemes. He affirmed, however, that Egypt is now less vulnerable to violence, that the Egyptian people are against terrorism, and that they resist it by themselves.

Mubarak: Separate Jordan Deal 'Dismayed' Syria

NC2812165394 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 1600 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak has affirmed that Egypt will not hesitate to help Kuwait if the latter is threatened once again, whether the Damascus Declaration continues to exist or not. In an interview published today by the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-WATAN, Mubarak announced that Syria is on the threshold of a peace deal with Israel in 1995. He affirmed that the obstacles on the Syrian-Israeli track are caused by a crisis of confidence between the two sides. However, Egypt and Washington are working on overcoming these obstacles. He pointed out that Syria and Jordan had agreed with each other that they would sign an agreement with Israel, but the Jordanian side signed a separate agreement. This dismayed the Syrians.

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President Mubarak commented on the recent Iraqi recognition of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi borders, saying that it is a step in the right direction. He expressed hopes for Arab reconciliation. He said that hopes should continue despite the fact that circumstances are very difficult because Arab reconciliation is necessary.

Mubarak spoke about the problem of terrorism in the Islamic world. He said: Terrorism distorts the image of Islam. It has conveyed the impression that Muslims are a terroristic people. This is the biggest insult to Muslims. He noted that any terrorist act, no matter how small, affects not only Egypt but all countries that suffer from this phenomenon or problem, despite the fact that such acts have decreased a great deal recently. Egypt has become one of the countries least affected by this violence.

On Egypt's request to join the Arab Maghreb Union, Mubarak clarified that it was joining not as member but as observer. This step complies with Moroccan Monarch King Hassan II's wish.

Writer Says U.S. Seeks Domination by Division

NC2912083794 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 22 Dec 94 pp 1, 3

[Article by Chief Editor Mahfuz al-Ansari: "Young Leadership for the Middle East; American Observer at the Muslims' Summit"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Based on the elimination, isolation, and embargo approach, the new American strategy targets not only states, but reaches out to cover international as well as regional organizations.

If our Arab, Middle Eastern region in particular is the focal point and crux of Washington's new strategy—being "ownerless," "without a master," and in need of "a young leadership" to lead it and administer its affairs—all the longstanding and solid old objects must be crushed and smashed. This is regardless of whether these objects are states that, with the force of history and reality, "constitute the region's biggest power," or ancient and firm organizations, even if they suffer nowadays from weakness and inactivity. By the latter I meant the Arab League.

This imperative elimination of the ancient, solid "old"—both states and organizations—is the basic condition for restructuring the new Middle East according to "the American style" and under the leadership of a "command" that is dependent on Washington, the "metropolis," or rather "the global capital."

In this context, and on the basis of that concept, an organized process to fragment the Arab world has started. It is a process to eliminate, underrate, or disrupt the Arabs' united organization, the "Arab League," to discredit it completely and prepare to "let it go."

Thus, a large-scale process started to promote the Middle Eastern concept, not as a huge vessel that groups Arabs and non-Arabs and maintains the ancient, great Arab entity, but as the "fashion" or alternative that rescues [yanshil] the region, or rather robs it of everything [writer plays on the verb yanshil, which means both rescuing and pick pocketing], or saves it from its backwardness and mismanagement as they claim.

The biggest irony in this is that they maintain the "double standard" policy. Seeing that NATO's task and mission has ended with the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet empire together with its military shield, the Warsaw Pact, we find the United States leading Eastern and Western Europe in an effort to sustain the western military organization, NATO. It is expanding the space in which it moves and the scope of its strategic activity, going beyond the states around the Atlantic to the oceans of the globe.

We find it expanding its membership and accepting the old rivals of the Warsaw Pact, particularly the East European states that isolate Federal Russia from the central European theater—Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic—as a first stage after which the membership of the remaining East European states can be considered. Meanwhile, the Russian Federation is being kept outside the alliance, satisfying itself with "associate membership" or honorary participation.

We find that the United States has started to turn NATO into "an international military machine," or its long arm that reaches the ends of the earth in the name of and under the banner of the United Nations. This experiment started in Bosnia in an ostentatious and well-studied rather than serious manner. Operation "Desert Storm" in the Gulf might have been an incomplete attempt to achieve integration between the international political machine, as represented in the United Nations and its executive authority the Security Council, and the Western military machine, better known as NATO.

On the other hand, the United States is actively seeking to ruin the Arab League and widen the gap among its members in order to create new axes and new spheres of attraction.

We can see that the United States is eager to keep the security of the Middle East and its countries "an imported, foreign security." It wishes this security to be foreign in its personnel, tools, methods, blocs, and alliances. The United States wants Middle East security to be a "Western, not an Arab security" with Western arrangements and Western "protectors."

For this reason we see it obstructing the Damascus Declaration and warning against implementing not only its security and military clauses but also its economic, cultural, and technical provisions.

We find that the United States objects to the revival of the Joint Arab Defense Pact in any form whatsoever

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despite the fact that this pact was the legal justification for Egyptian and Syrian participation in the liberation of Kuwait.

We see it becoming angry and putting pressure on Egypt to sign treaties banning the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction including biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons even if Egypt has no such arsenals. At the same time it is "kind," pleased, and supportive of Israel's possession of all types of weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, chemical, and biological.

It is in this context that we can understand U.S. actions and policies. We understand why its newspapers and audiovisual media—which are widespread, dominant, and in control of the airwaves everywhere on the planet—distort the facts, disseminate rumors, cast suspicion about Egypt's future and capabilities, and encourage despair and frustration.

We understand why it watched closely, minute by minute, the proceedings of the recent Islamic summit in Casablanca and the meetings of its experts, ministers, and heads of state. It watched, followed, and warned against adopting any resolution seeking to lift Iraq's siege and the sanctions imposed on it.

It warned against listening to the radicals who hold the United States responsible for the "international chaos" and the tragedies in the Islamic world, in Afghanistan, Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, Palestine, Libya, Lebanon, and the countries where large Muslim minorities live such as the Philippines, China, India, and Kashmir.

The U.S. ambassador to Morocco and his embassy's overt and covert personnel did not leave the places where the delegations were staying and meeting in Casablanca's major hotels—the Royal Mansour, the Hyatt Regency, and the Sheraton. They held meetings continuously and never stopped gathering information and issuing instructions.

It is noteworthy that there was considerable compliance with U.S. demands during the summit, particularly by those countries termed "radical" or revolutionary. These countries did not transgress but rather used flexible and calm language. Indeed the "radicals" largely avoided any public participation in the discussions that might reveal their positions. They limited themselves to behind-the-scenes meetings, far from the conference halls.

The explanation is easy. None of these countries is capable of "open confrontation" with the savage onslaught of blockades, isolation, and economic and political sanctions that is indeed being waged against them on the international, collective, and individual levels.

"Preparing the ground...!!" [ellipses as published]. Therefore, as we have already noted, the new map that is being drawn for the Middle East, as part of the overall global map, is based on the following:

—Hints are being made that a new "Middle Eastern bloc" will be established and managed by an untraditional "young leadership," armed with the modern era's tools of "science and technology," open to the West and "subservient to it," and having connections in the world of finance, economy, and trade. Israel is the candidate for this "leadership."

This does not mean that the new Middle Eastern arrangement or, indeed, the Western policy adopted by the dominant superpower—whether its center of power is London or Washington, as it has become—seeks unification and the gathering of the region's countries into one bloc. Western policy is based on the principle of divide and rule.

The new arrangement seeks domination by creating divisions, by keeping the countries of the region dispersed, by exacerbating their disagreements, and encouraging apprehension and suspicion among them, particularly those belonging to the same culture, nationality, and religion. It is based on using one "trump card" that can serve as a liaison, a safety valve, and an administrator of energy, trade, financial, and economic affairs and that can do this job on a bilateral or multilateral level. Naturally this trump card is Israel.

The second basis is dispensing with or marginalizing major, deep-rooted regional powers. Of greatest importance among these regional Middle Eastern and Arab powers are Egypt, Iraq, and Iran. Disregarding their differences, competition, and policies, these three powers represent centers of influence and lines of religious attraction with their old and new intellectual and jurisprudence schools and their holy places and pilgrimage sites, which are visited by millions of religious people. [passage omitted]

The fourth [as published] basis is cutting lines of communication, destroying the bridges linking these major regional powers with the outside world and with the emerging great world powers by tightening the grip of isolation, blockade, and sanctions and by banning dealings and trade between scientific and technological centers in the west and east and these countries. [passage omitted]

A quick look at what is happening around us and what is being done against us and others undoubtedly reveals that this new U.S. strategy on annihilation, isolation, blockade, and dispensing with others is being implemented to the letter:

—The insistence on confrontation with Libya, severing cooperative ties with it, and closing Egypt's western borders;

—What is happening in Sudan, the continuous incitement against Egypt by one who is ambitious for alleged Islamic leadership in order to set up a wall of emnity on Egypt's southern border is also an implementation of the policy of blockade and isolation. Shaykh Hasan al-Turabi is doing this job perfectly.

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—This provocative, unjustified intransigence on the part of Israel as it puts on the Palestinians the responsibility for resistance and violence against the Israeli occupation as well as Israel's crude and terroristic methods of causing tension, destroying the Palestinian entity's unity, and creating a flammable buffer zone separating Egypt from its eastern neighbors are also a sincere and full implementation of the strategy.

These are the common features and their application on the ground. As for the questions of how we strike at this plan and strategy and how to really begin breaking this blockade and isolation, they will be the subject of our next discussion.

Editor Summoned Over Article on U.S. Military Base

NC2812210594 Paris AFP in English 2033 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Dec 28 (AFP)—Prosecutors on Wednesday [28 December] summoned the editor of a bi-weekly Islamic newspaper to appear in court over an article which alleged there was a U.S. military base in Egypt's Sinai region, judicial sources said.

Majdi Ahmad Husayn will be questioned either Thursday or Saturday by the prosecution service about the article written by 'Adil Husayn which appeared in AL-SHA'B on Friday.

'Adil Husayn was remanded in custody on Sunday for two weeks after being charged with "spreading fundamentalist ideas." The paper is the mouthpiece of the Labour Party, of which 'Adil Husayn is secretary general.

The editor was summonsed following a complaint by the Defence Ministry over the article in which 'Adil Husayn said the United States "possessed" a military base in Sinai, in northeastern Egypt.

The ministry said the statement was "completely baseless."

Egyptian journalists were planning a sit-in at their trade union headquarters in Cairo late Wednesday to protest 'Adil Husayn's detention.

He is also charged with bringing into Egypt leaflets from leaders of the outlawed militant group al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah [Islamic Group] in exile when he returned from a trip to Europe in October. He has denied the charges.

Moslem militants launched a campaign in March 1992 to topple the secular government of President Husni Mubarak. Some 550 people have died in the resulting violence, latest figures show.

Renewed U.S. Anti-Egypt Press Campaign Feared

NC2812212594 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 22 Dec 94 p 12

[From the "Dividing Lines" column by Samir Rajab: "After the Visit by the Israeli President, Will the Campaign Against Egypt Intensify?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli President 'Ezer Weizman came to Egypt, which welcomed and honored him, as is its tradition.

Weizman met with President Husni Mubarak many times. The Israeli president met with ministers and others and said what he wanted to say. He expressed his opinion and his country's opinion on various issues. He had an opportunity to visit a number of industrial projects in Egypt inside the new urban centers and outside.

Undoubtedly, this man left Cairo with good impressions about what he saw and heard.

However, despite all this, I expect that the campaign against Egypt which the U.S. press is waging along with some television networks, such as CNN and others, will not stop. In fact, it might even increase in intensity.

The reason, in my opinion, is that President Mubarak once again reiterated with great courage and strength Egypt's stand on updating the treaty banning the spread of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. On Israeli television the president reminded the world that the first statement on this issue came from Egypt when it asked that the Middle East be turned into a region free of weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, he will not sign the agreement updating the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty unless Israel signs it too.

This principled stand did not please Israel, nor did it please its supporters and those who have pledged to protect it. They wanted to put pressure on Egypt in any way. But all in vain. Our principles will not change or be altered. President Mubarak has acquired fame among world leaders for delivering what he promises. He respects his people's desires and constitutional institutions to the utmost, and protects their free will with all the power he has been endowed with.

Yes, we welcomed President Weizman, but that is one thing and stands are another. Our interests were never up for bartering of any kind, and will never be. If Israel and its supporters have nothing to fear, then why do they hesitate to sign the treaty?

Frankly speaking, I was very impressed with the question Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa posed yesterday: Why should there be a restricted or unannounced nuclear program in the Middle East? If we are talking about a future based on joint security and cooperation, why does Israel insist on a nuclear program?

Truly, the issue raises doubts and suspicions. Whoever has a specific program—if his intentions are honest—should make his program public. Also, does Israel agree to keep the region free of weapons of mass destruction or not? If it has no objections, it should say so frankly. Then, peace will have meaning and the future will herald optimism and the hope that the wall of no-confidence built throughout years of war, conflict, and suspicion will topple.

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Once again we confirm the same point. The people of Egypt should set their minds at ease that no entity, whatever or whoever it may be, can impose its opinion on Egypt. We are a people who respect treaties and agreements. We know perfectly well what the principles of hospitality are. However, on the other hand, we want those people who have dealings with us to be of the same level of honesty and clarity as we are. When President Mubarak called for removing weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East, he had the interests of mankind as his objective, a mankind that has suffered and been tortured, whose blood has been shed and whose unity has been shattered. Mankind must one day be able to live in peace, to feel secure about his life, particularly now that the peace train has started moving in the right direction. It has been proven that killing only leads to more killing. The practical reality has been confirmed that war does not decide any issue. Therefore, why don't we unite our efforts to build firm bases for economic and social entities which could prosper and grow?

Egypt has declared its position and will not waver from it. However, if some parties deliberately continue along their same old road, then Egypt will declare the following fact resonantly: When it is in the right, it is not afraid of any accusations leveled against it, no matter what lies these sides fabricate and stories they make up.

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Bahrain

Opposition Says Violence Flares Again

NC2912073194 Paris AFP in English 2240 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Dec 28 (AFP)—New clashes between Shiite Moslems and police have flared in Bahrain, the exiled Bahraini opposition said Wednesday [28 December] without saying if there had been casualties.

The banned Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain [IFLB] said "popular demonstrations" erupted late Tuesday in the Shiite town of Sanabis, about three kilometres (about two miles) west of the capital Manama.

"Protesters burnt car tyres and threw stones at security forces after they used tear-gas and rubber bullets" to disperse the crowd, the group said in statement sent to AFP in Nicosia.

The IFLB said security forces had been unable to get through into the town and were posted on the main roads into the area.

Similar clashes happened in the Karazkan area in southern Bahrain and were still going on at dawn on Wednesday.

The statement added the Bahraini authorities had secretly buried in the desert the bodies of people "who died under torture or during clashes instead of returning them to their relatives."

Violence first erupted after the arrest on December 5 of Shiite cleric Shaykh 'Ali Salman, who had called for the restoration of parliament suspended in 1975.

According to the opposition 15 people died in the clashes—11 protesters and four policeman—and dozens were wounded. But the government has said only one policemen was killed and an unspecified number of policemen were wounded.

It was the worst unrest since the former British protectorate gained its independence in 1971.

On Tuesday witnesses contacted from Nicosia said there was tight security in the main Shiite towns to prevent further clashes.

The IFLB said some 2,200 people accused of taking part in the violence had been arrested.

Independent sources have said that Shiite Moslems make up 55 to 60 percent of the population but the Sunni Moslem government has said they are only 35 percent.

Saudi Interior Minister Arrives on Visit

LD2812164394 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1600 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Al Manamah, 28 Dec—His Royal Highness Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the interior minister, arrived in Al Manamah this evening on a visit to the sisterly State of Bahrain in response to an invitation from His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of the State of Bahrain. [passage omitted]

'Privileged Relations' Discussed

NC2912093194 Paris AFP in English 2244 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, Dec 28 (AFP)—The amir of Bahrain on Wednesday [28 December] held talks with the Saudi interior minister on the "privileged relations" between their two countries.

The official agency GNA said Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah also discussed the 15th summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held here earlier in December with his Saudi guest, Interior Minister Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz.

The GCC summit which opened on December 19 took place as hundreds of young Shiite Moslems protested here in clashes which the Bahraini opposition in exile said were crushed with the help of Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi prince was also due to meet his Bahraini counterpart Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Khalifah Al Khalifah to discuss ways of boosting cooperation in security issues, GNA said.

According to the opposition 15 people died in the clashes, 11 protesters and four policeman, and dozens were wounded. But the government has said only one policemen was killed and an unspecified number of policemen were wounded.

The violence which erupted after the arrest on December 5 of Shiite cleric Shaykh 'Ali Salman was the worst since the former British protectorate gained its independence in 1971.

Meanwhile, in Riyadh Saudi's King Fahd appointed his youngest son 'Abd-al-'Aziz an advisor to the cabinet, the Saudi agency SPA said.

The 24-year-old graduate of Riyadh University has taken part in several GCC conferences and meetings between Islamic countries.

Defense Minister Returns From Egypt, Praises Talks

JN2812190194 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1430 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 28 Dec (WAKH)—Staff Lieutenant General Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Ahmad Al Thani, Bahraini defense minister and deputy commander in chief of the Bahraini Defense Force, returned to Manama from Egypt at noon today after a visit of several days.

He was welcomed by Chief (?of Staff) Staff Major General Shaykh 'Abdallah [middle name indistinct] Al Khalifah and a number of senior Defense Force officers.

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The Bahraini minister praised the results of his talks with Field Marshal Muhammad Husayn Tantawi, commander in chief of the Egyptian Armed Forces and minister of defense and war production. He said that the existing and continuing cooperation between the two countries in all fields has taken vanguard steps thanks to the support of the two countries' leaders to boost the march of cooperation and brotherhood.

The Bahraini defense minister and deputy commander in chief of the Defense Force praised Egypt's role in serving the Arab nation's interests and Arab solidarity. He stressed Bahrain's eagerness [words indistinct].

He noted that the area states and peoples seek cooperation in all fields of development in the interest of our Arab nation.

Saudi Arabia

U.S. Newspaper Report on Rabin's Oman Visit Denied

LD2812164794 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1615 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh, 28 Dec—In a statement to SPA, a responsible source has today denied a report published in the WASHINGTON POST's issue of yesterday, Tuesday [27 December], to the effect that Yitzhaq Rabin's visit to the Sultanate of Oman did not take place without Saudi approval.

The source said that "the report was absolutely baseless."

Yemen

House Speaker Returns, Comments on Saudi Visit

JN2812190994 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar, speaker of the House of Representatives, returned to Sanaa from Saudi Arabia at noon today after a tour which took him to a number of sisterly and friendly states.

The brother speaker of the House of Representatives made a statement to the Yemeni News Agency, SABA', in which he expressed satisfaction with the results of his visit to Saudi Arabia and his meetings with brother officials there. He said: The results of the visit were good and promising. We met with King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, who displayed full understanding and complete eagerness to restore harmony and peace between the brotherly Yemeni and Saudi peoples. He added: King Fahd confirmed the invitation to brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih to visit Saudi Arabia within the next few days.

In his statement, Shaykh 'Abdallah stressed that the doors are open to restore relations to normal. He said the atmosphere is ripe, intentions are good, and that the brother leaders in Saudi Arabia and the political leadership in our country under brother Lt. Gen. 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih are determined to turn a new leaf full of brotherhood, sincerity, and fruitful cooperation in the service of the two sisterly countries' joint interests.

Sudanese-Eritrean Talks in Sanaa Said 'Stumbling'

JN2912120394 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 27 Dec 94 pp 1, 4

[Report by Faysal Makram in Sanaa]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Sudanese-Eritrean talks that were held within the framework of the joint security committee in Sanaa the day before yesterday are stumbling.

AL-HAYAH has learned from informed sources in Sanaa that the meetings that were held until a late hour on Sunday-Monday, in the presence of Brigadier General Ghalib al-Qamash, chief of the Yemeni Political Security Forces, have not produced any positive results regarding the efforts to contain differences and ease tension between the two countries. This failure was blamed on the Eritrean side's refusal to discuss the issues presented to the joint security committee until after Khartoum agrees to issue a statement denouncing the Eritrean Islamic Jihad group. The Eritrean Government says that this group has camps in Sudan on the border with Eritrea, with the full knowledge and support of the Sudanese Government.

The sources added that the Sudanese side in the committee has conveyed to the conferees its government's readiness to receive the Eritrean members of the committee, along with a number of Yemeni specialists, taking into consideration that Yemen is the mediator, to make sure that the Sudanese Government has not supported the establishment of camps for extremist or non-extremist elements from the sons of the Eritrean community in Sudan, especially since such camps do not actually exist, and also to make sure that the Sudanese Government is giving suitable treatment to the sons of the Eritrean community in Sudan.

The same sources noted that Yemeni President Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih will intervene through his contacts with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki and Sudanese President 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir in order to resume the meetings of the joint security committee under the auspices of the Yemeni Government. Yemen's current mediation has thus far proved fruitful in forming a joint security committee between the two countries to decide on disputed issues.

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'Aziz Reacts to Turkey's Extension of Mandate

JN2812221594 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Turkey's Parliament this evening agreed to extend the mandate of U.S. troops in Turkey for another six months. Some 202 members voted in favor of extending the mandate, while 160 voted against it.

Commenting on this decision, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz said that the extension of the U.S. troops' mandate in Turkey is really astonishing. In a statement to the Iraqi News Agency, 'Aziz said that these troops have been in Turkey since 1991 and have been violating Iraq's sovereignty and encouraging an abnormal secessionist situation in northern Iraq. He added: The experience of the past years has proved that this U.S. military presence threatens the security of Turkey itself. Since the arrival of those troops in Turkey, the security situation there has been exacerbating. The U.S. allegation that this presence is aimed at protecting Iraq's Kurds against alleged attacks by the Iraqi authorities is a false allegation refuted by events.

The deputy prime minister said: Since the beginning of the presence of those troops in Turkey, northern Iraq has not enjoyed security and stability. Rather it has been targeted by continuous Turkish and Iranian military attacks. Likewise, the parties forcibly controlling the region [northern Iraq] through collusion with the United States and its allies are engaged in fighting among themselves. This fighting has resulted in hundreds, nay, thousands of civilian casualties. Security and stability have been completely absent in the region, where services and development have also been hindered. Even the UN activities in the region are facing numerous dangers.

Tariq 'Aziz wondered: What use, then, does the continued presence of those forces have? Their presence does not have any positive meaning, contrary to what the Americans and some Turkish officials who support the continued presence of those troops claim. Their continued presence has one objective—namely, a U.S. political objective which threatens the security of Turkey itself and Iraq's sovereignty and national unity and contributes to prolonging the unjust blockade which harms both Iraq and Turkey.

Turkey Reportedly Exchanging Food for Oil

NC2612161694 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] According to reports from northern Iraq, large numbers of Turkish trucks carrying oil derivatives are shuttling between Iraq and Turkey despite the Turkish Government's assertions that it abides by the international embargo which was imposed on Iraq as a result of Saddam Husayn's actions.

The reports state that 500-700 Turkish trucks daily traverse the Ibrahim al-Khalil Bridge carrying food and that they return loaded with Iraqi oil.

Minister Cites 'Renewed Interest' in Oil Sector

JN2412095994 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0745 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 24 Dec (INA)—Minister of Oil Dr. Safa' Hadi Jawad say that American, European, and Asian companies have shown real, renewed interest in streamlining Iraq's oil industry once the sanctions are lifted.

In statements published by AL-QADISIYAH today, he cited the names of leading firms from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Brazil, Spain, and Italy. Some of these firms are pursuing deals to boost their investment in Iraq's oil sector, according to the minister.

Ongoing contacts with these companies have already produced contracts, which, Jawad said, will be implemented once the sanctions are removed.

Iraq's oil projects are functioning and their technical staff are running them as envisaged by a five-year plan and 10-year plan of prospecting for significant oil deposits in the central and western regions of Iraq. This, he added, is in addition to streamlining existing oil fields and refineries and boosting their yield.

The oil minister revealed that Iraq has placed the excellent expertise it has acquired over the years in the oil industry at the disposal of brothers in Jordan, Sudan, Libya, and Yemen, and is prepared to be equally forthcoming with other Arab states.

Minister Blames U.S., Britain for Shortages

JN2712094094 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0820 GMT 27 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 27 Dec (INA)—Health Minister Dr. Umid Midhat Mubarak says that many international pharmaceutical firms have not fulfilled their obligations toward Iraq despite the fact that Iraq had met its financial obligations to these firms before 2 August 1990.

In a statement to the Baghdad daily AL-JUMHURIYAH published today, the health minister noted that the fact that these firms have not fulfilled their obligations shows the inhuman role played by the United States and its stooges to cause great harm to the Iraqis.

The health minister added that the real difficulties facing the health situation, including the provision of medicines and prevention services to the citizens, have led to an increase in the mortality rates of children and mothers and a rise in the rates of communicable and food diseases.

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He said that denying Iraq health equipment that is used in surgical operations, such as anesthetics, sutures, and blood bags, has resulted in a sharp drop in surgeries. He also noted that the great shortage of accessories for x-ray machines has created big problems and increased the suffering of patients who require diagnostic measures.

He said this reveals anew the inhuman practices of the United States, Britain, and their allies in putting pressure on the UN Sanctions Committee to obstruct Iraq's acquisition of pharmaceutical requirements.

Ex-Intelligence Chief Says Regime Hiding Weapons

LD2312141594 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 1130 GMT 23 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The former head of the Iraqi Army Information Office, Gen Wafiq al-Samarra'i, has said Iraq still possesses weapons of mass destruction hidden from the UN inspectors.

According to AFP, Gen 'Ali [as heard] Samarra'i has stated that Baghdad presently possesses hundreds of biological and tens of ballistic Scud missiles. According to the report, the head of the special commission for the disarmament of Iraq on Tuesday [20 December] in a report to the U.S. [pauses]... to the UN Security Council stressed that there are still reports on the biological and chemical weapons of Iraq which have remained undisclosed.

Saddam Son-in-Law Said Supervising Secret Factories

JN2612193194 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Saddam Husayn has again charged his son-in-law Husayn Kamil with the task of supervising secret factories for nuclear research and chemical industrialization. Husayn Kamil does not leave his underground workshops in al-Tarmiyah, al-Taji, and Abu Ghurayb. These factories are camouflaged by farms, trees, small rivers, and shacks.

In a statement to the [Iraqi National] Congress, an informed source said that Husayn Kamil has convinced a number of Russian experts and other experts to work for Iraqi industry at high salaries. Those experts, as well as the Iraqi experts, move secretly in Iraq and nobody is allowed to approach them.

Explosion Reportedly Rocks 'Udayy's Headquarters

NC2812161394 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Eyewitnesses from the officers neighborhood in Zayyunah have confirmed that an explosion caused by a booby-trapped car occurred at noon on Thursday [22 December] near the fence of the Olympic Committee Building, which 'Udayy Saddam Husayn uses as a permanent headquarters.

According to witnesses, the explosion rocked the entire area, cut the power supply, and caused damage to the building's fence and some buildings near the fence. The regime's press has kept silent about the incident.

The regime's men were seen taking burned cars away from the scene of the incident, filling the crater the explosion caused near the fence, and repairing electrical wiring in the area.

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No-Confidence Motions Submitted Over Efrat Freeze

TA2812134294 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The NRP [National Religious Party] and Tzomet factions have submitted a motion of no-confidence in the government over the decision to freeze construction work at Efrat. Both factions said this was a shameful capitulation to Arab terrorism.

Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the vote will take place in the Knesset next Monday [2 January].

Foreign Ministry Denies Construction Halted at Efrat

TA2812164494 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Attorney General's Office is continuing its investigation into the legality of the construction work near Efrat on land Palestinians claim belongs to them. Attorney General Mikha'el Ben-Ya'ir is due to hold consultations tomorrow if the work can be halted for security reasons.

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said no order to stop construction would be issued unless legal advisers give the go ahead. A Foreign Ministry spokesperson denied earlier reports that the government had already issued an order to halt construction. More from reporter David Ze'ev:

[Begin recording] [Ze'ev] Attorney General Mikha'el Ben-Ya'ir says the inquiry is in progress. He spoke to National Religious Party [NRP] Knesset Member [MK] Hanan Porat, a settler leader, in an informal conversation in the Knesset as reporters listened in. The attorney general raised doubts over whether a meeting with settlement leaders would even be necessary. MK Porat argued that the rights of the individual are involved in what is a private construction project and that it is not up to the government to decide. Porat's NRP has presented a joint motion of no confidence in the government over the issue with Tzomet. Tzomet MK Eli'ezer Sandberg is demanding an investigation into the role of left-wing Israelis in the protests at the site and whether they incited the Palestinians.

[Sandberg] I did not say that they did it because this is like making the blame before investigating, but I think that what you saw on television yesterday and the fact that they came to this place a few days before and started to speak with the Arab Palestinians and started to push them toward those demonstrations. [sentence as heard] At least that is the information that I received by the communications. I believe it needs to be investigated.

[Ze'ev] The Meretz faction in the Knesset met and vowed to continue the fight against building the new neighborhood. Here is Meretz cabinet minister Amnon Rubinstein.

[Rubinstein] We are in the government and we will put this case before the prime minister and before the cabinet. We think that in this very, very delicate situation of negotiations with the Palestinians we should not disrupt the status quo in such a blunt way and this is our position. We were told by the prime minister and the minister of housing that there are some legal difficulties. I do not think that it is a legal problem, I think it is a political problem.

[Ze'ev] The office of Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres retracted an earlier statement that Peres had told Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat that work would stop until the attorney general's decision. Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin strongly denied there was any such order to stop construction. [end recording]

Peres on Efrat Affair, Labor Party Developments

TA2812191494 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 28 Dec 94

[Interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by correspondent Menashe Raz on 28 December; place not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Raz] Mr. Peres, what about the dispute over the land between al-Khidr and Efrat? Should the State of Israel surrender to the Palestinian dictate on this issue?

[Peres] There is no Palestinian dictate. One must stick to the issue and examine what has been decided upon and approved. Clearly, the state cannot ignore the potential which is inherent in this dispute and its effect throughout the world as well as in Israel. A government must take everything into account. No one can dictate to it, but it must consider everything.

[Raz] If I understand correctly you feel that construction work there should be stopped?

[Peres] First of all, I would like to examine the facts. I think that if one considers the issue, then construction work should not have been started there at the present time. It brings us no benefit and is not the most pressing matter in the world. We are on the verge of starting negotiations over the second stage and one must be permitted to conduct these negotiations under acceptable conditions.

[Raz] Mr. Peres, are you worried by recent developments in the Labor Party?

[Peres] Yes, I am concerned.

[Raz] In some respects, you now find yourself in a bind. If you get intensively involved in party issues, you will be accused of seeking to undermine Yitzhaq Rabin. If you fail to do this, you will be accused of seeing the writing on the wall but doing nothing to prevent the party's collapse.

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[Peres] Look, people were born without wings and are trapped on the ground. I have a job to do in a certain field in which I operate and to which I currently devote most of my attention. This does not mean that I have forgotten the party or lost interest in its condition.

[Raz] Is not focusing your attention elsewhere really tantamount to neglecting the party?

[Peres] No, perish the thought. It means that I will do whatever I can within the framework of my responsibilities, and that is indeed what I shall do.

[Raz] Could you and Yitzhaq Rabin agree on some version of a joint elected leadership in the Labor Party?

[Peres] I want to prove to myself and to my colleagues that the problem is not leadership but rather one's political direction. I do not fight for power but for substance. Contrary to all the predictions of a power struggle—and it is very easy to get into quarrels if one puts personal prestige or the struggle for power at the center of everything—one must set an example by placing substance and not power at the center.

'Secret' Plan To Annex Settlements Said Being Formed

TA2912113994 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 29 Dec 94 p 4

[Report by 'Ofer Petersburg]

[FBIS Translated Text] A secret plan to annex settlements beyond the Green Line is being formed in government offices. The issue, characterized as "very sensitive," has been raised in several discussions the prime minister held with senior officials of the Defense and the Construction and Housing Ministries.

Following are the main points of the plan: In the first stage, the construction drive in Alfey Menashe, Oranit, and Har Adar, beyond the Green Line, will be resumed. The option of carrying out a similar move in places such as Sha'arey Tiqva and Qiryat Sefer, which would thicken the "divide" (the term used for the area in which the Green Line runs), is also under consideration. Incidentally, a similar move is under way in the ultra-Orthodox settlement of Betar 'Ilit, which is also located beyond the Green Line. It has been decided that thousands of apartments will be built there next year, as part of the government plan.

Each of the settlements already has the plans for the construction of hundreds of housing units. The plans include an idea on how to "add" them to Israel. Here is the plan, going from north to south:

—Wadi 'Ara: The Tal-'Iron local council, made up of the communities of Harish and Qatzir inside the Green Line, will be expanded to include Reyhan, Hinanit, and Shaqed, east of the Green Line.

—The Triangle area: Sal'it and Tzufit, beyond the line, will be linked to Kokhav Ya'ir, Tzur Yig'al, and Tzur Natan, inside the Green Line.

—The Kafr Qasim area: Yarhiv, Nirit, Matan, and Horashim, which are inside the Green Line, will be linked to Oranit and Sha'arey Tiqva, beyond the line. At the same time, Alfey Menashe will be expanded.

—The Modi'in area: Ultra-Orthodox Qiryat Sefer and probably Matityahu, both located on and to the east of the Green Line, will become part of the Modi'in Regional Council, west of the line.

—The Jerusalem corridor: Har Adar, a neighborhood of villas built on Radar Hill, which was occupied in 1967, will be "moved" into Israeli territory and become part of the belt of settlements beyond the Green Line which are to surround the capital: Giv'on Hahadasha and Giv'at Ze'ev, north of Jerusalem; Har Adar to the west; Ma'ale Adumim to the east; and Betar 'Ilit and Tzur Hadassah to the south.

Beilin Comments on Mubarak-al-Asad Summit

TA2812165094 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 28 Dec 94

[Telephone interview with Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin by Razi Barqay; place not given—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Barqay] Mr. Beilin, did you receive any reports on the Mubarak-al-Asad summit in Egypt?

[Beilin] Not yet. It is still too early to get updates when the discussions have only just started.

[Barqay] You were probably apprised, however, about Mubarak's harsh remarks.

[Beilin] We are certainly not happy with these remarks, but I think we should see them against the background of the change in our region over the last year. After many years of being an isolated island in our region with diplomatic relations only with Egypt, Israel has become an extremely important player in the local arena. Israel's gross national product is larger than that of all its neighbors put together. Israel is indeed making some countries feel it could become extremely dominant in the region.

[Barqay] We hoped, Yosi Beilin, that some sort of moderate Cairo-Amman axis would develop. Instead we are witnessing the emergence of an extremely threatening Cairo-Damascus axis.

[Beilin] No, it is not a threatening axis. I certainly do not regard it as harboring a strategic threat. I believe Egypt finds it vital to lead the Arab world and to dictate the rate of normalization with Israel. I hope that President Mubarak—who is a pragmatic and extremely moderate leader who has a deep interest in the continuation of the peace process—will be the dominant force in these

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meetings with King Fahd and President al-Asad; that he will lead them instead of allowing them to lead him to a much more extremist position than his.

[Barqay] Tell me, why can't he stand us?

[Beilin] Who are you referring to?

[Barqay] Mubarak.

[Beilin] I think, Razi, that your phrasing is both unscientific and inaccurate. I think Egypt has greatly benefited from its peace relations with Israel. I think Egypt today is aware of the fact that Israel is forging new ties with more elements....

[Barqay, interrupting] Well that is great, at last they are no longer isolated.

[Beilin] That is true. This is why they have mixed feelings. On the one hand Egypt can tell the Arab world: You see, we were right to have established relations with Israel many years ago. On the other hand, however, it is telling the Arab world: What is the rush, you have already overtaken us, wait a little bit. I think that today's summit is being convened against the backdrop of those mixed feelings. I am not concerned about the strategic threat emanating from this meeting. I think it can be beneficial if a more pragmatic axis emerges which leads President al-Asad toward a more intensive political move in exchange for some sort of Egyptian-Saudi statement expressing understanding for al-Asad's needs and interests vis-a-vis Israel.

[Barqay] I asked you if he cannot stand us because of recent messages coming from Egypt, such as the slight to 'Ezer Weizman, who mistakenly thought he would come back from Egypt with a promise of a reciprocal visit by Mubarak to Israel; or the extremely harsh statements coming from the Egyptian press and Egyptian intellectuals. It appears that Mubarak is evincing an extremely tough and cold attitude toward us.

[Beilin] I think it is wrong to say there is Egyptian hostility toward us, certainly not from the direction of President Mubarak. There is a new ball game in the Middle East neighborhood; Israel is becoming an extremely dominant factor in this neighborhood, and even if we do not have any intention of becoming a dominant factor taking over the regional economy, this is how the situation is seen by many elements in the region. We will have to act cautiously and prove we are not interested in becoming dominant. When we entered the peace process we did not foresee that the Arab world would regard us in this way, and we have to take this under consideration. We cannot ignore this, because even if this is untrue, this image of Israel as such a significant element in the region—a sort of local power—is the image our neighbors have formed of it.

Peres Sees No Anti-Israeli Trend in Alexandria Summit

TA2912102794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres does not believe the Alexandria summit harbors any anti-Israeli trend. Mr. Peres believes the participants regard the summit as being pro-Syrian and pro-peace—but peace Syria-style. Our correspondent Gay Qotev reports that according to the foreign minister, the talks with Syria in Washington will continue, because neither side is interested in ending the negotiations.

Regarding the withdrawal of the Economic Arrangements Law, Peres said this happens every time the draft budget is debated. The foreign minister expressed the hope that the problem will be resolved.

U.S. Help To Block Egypt-Syria-Saudi Front Sought

TA2912101294 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 29 Dec 94 p 7

[Report by Hemi Shalev and Shefi Gabay]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Senior political sources last night expressed concern over the results of the tripartite summit in Alexandria and over what seems to be an Egyptian move in support of the Syrian effort to delay the development of normalization between Israel and other Arab countries.

Israel will ask the United States to act in Cairo and Riyadh to prevent the development of an Egyptian-Saudi-Syrian front against the strengthening of Israeli-Jordanian relations and the developing relations between Israel and Persian Gulf and North African countries. [passage omitted]

The Foreign Ministry has been following the development of the "tripartite axis" for several months. The axis began forming with the strengthening of Saudi-Syrian relations, and Egypt has only recently joined in the political coordination between Riyadh and Damascus.

A senior political source in Jerusalem said last night that, in fact, Egypt has launched a struggle against Israel over "political hegemony in the Middle East." In addition to its accelerated activity against Israel's nuclear capability, Egypt is also trying to persuade Muslim countries not to rush in developing relations with Israel.

Israel is particularly concerned over the growing isolation of Jordan, which is coming under fire from Arab countries for being too quick in its rapprochement with Israel. This concern has increased recently in the wake of reports of Jordanian disappointment over the failure of the peace accord with Israel to yield immediate economic growth.

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At the same time, Major General Uri Sagi, IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch chief, yesterday estimated that "conditions have ripened" for an Israeli-Syrian agreement. Sagi said that the two countries "know and are familiar with" the other party's stands by now, based on the documents they exchanged over the last year, and all that is left now is the political decision.

Sagi made the remarks in a speech before the Foreign Ministry management. Earlier, in a discussion of the Inner Cabinet, Sagi provided a very positive report on the military talks with the Syrians in Washington last week.

Rabin Rejects Call for Special Status for Jerusalem

TA2912120594 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 29 Dec 94 p 2

[Report by Haim Shapiro]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin yesterday firmly rejected a call by the heads of the Christian churches in Jerusalem for a special status for the holy city, guaranteed by the international community.

Rabin, who also serves as minister for religious affairs, was speaking at President 'Ezer Weizman's annual New Year's reception for the leaders of the Christian communities at Bet Hanassi. He was reacting to a memorandum on Jerusalem from the heads of the churches which, though never published, was widely circulated among Christian clerics.

The memorandum, which says that "Jerusalem is too precious to be dependent solely on municipal or national political authorities, whoever they may be," has been considered by many Israeli officials to be a challenge to Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem.

Until now, there had been no official Israeli reaction to the memorandum, although Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert described it as a "strange combination of prejudices and distorted perceptions."

"Jerusalem shall remain a united city under Israeli rule," Rabin said.

He added that the principle of freedom of access to the holy places did not necessitate a special political status for the city. As far as the Christian churches were concerned, they are faring far better since 1967 than before, Rabin said.

Although he did not refer directly to the memorandum, Rabin acknowledged that the uncertainty generated by the peace process had caused concern on the part of some Christians. He assured those present that the situation of the churches would be considered when the issue of Jerusalem was raised, as the last item in the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Weizman also referred to the memorandum, albeit more obliquely, when he stressed that Israel is committed to freedom of worship and free access to the holy sites of all religious groups.

In his reply on behalf of the churches, Greek Orthodox Patriarch Diodoros I, the senior bishop in Jerusalem, also referred to the memorandum, but denied that it was politically motivated.

Diodoros stressed the historic rights of the Christian churches, even though the Christian communities are small.

Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah, however, was far more militant in his remarks, decrying the closure now in effect, which restricts entrance of Arab residents of the territories to the capital. He rejected such restrictions for any reason, including security considerations.

"All of us want Jerusalem to remain one and to have free access to everyone who wants to come to Jerusalem. What we are suffering now is that Jerusalem is closed. We do not want it closed for any reason," he said.

Report on Transfer of U.S. Technology to PRC Denied

TA2912055394 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The LOS ANGELES TIMES says that Israel is assisting China in building an advanced fighter plane. According to the report, the plane would be similar to the F-16 and be based on the Lavi fighter, which was canceled. The paper said that the U.S. Administration is checking whether Israel transferred American technology to the Chinese. [passage omitted]

Israeli sources in Washington have denied that Israel is transferring or has transferred American technology for the development of a fighter plane in China.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0500 GMT on 29 December adds: "Our correspondent in Washington Arye Golan reports that the Israeli sources emphasized that Israel's defense industries operate in the United States on the basis of U.S. law. Consequently, they apply for the licenses necessary for various deals.

["Marvin Klemow, one of Israel Aircraft Industries [IAI] heads in the United States, said that IAI is not transferring U.S. technology to China and has not applied for such a license."

[Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 29 December carries a related report by Alon Pinkas on page 1, providing the following quote from "a defense ministry source": "All I can tell you is that whatever defense contacts and programs Israel has with foreign governments, the US is knowledgeable about it if it is directly or indirectly involved, politically or technologically."]

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Trade Agreement With Israel To Be Signed

TA2812163894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] At the discussions in Tiberias between Israeli and Jordanian representatives it was agreed to expedite negotiations on the first trade agreement between the two countries and complete them within a matter of weeks.

According to the peace treaty, the trade agreement is scheduled to be signed in several months.

The Israeli representatives at the trade talks said they were prepared to partially accede to the Jordanian demand that preferential treatment be accorded to Jordanian goods which do not compete with Israeli products.

Our correspondent Ilan Ro'e adds that the representatives also discussed linking both countries' electricity grids and cooperation in the fields of geology and communications.

Israeli Nomination of Ambassador Not Yet Received

JN2912102394 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 29 Dec 94 pp 1, 21

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—Well informed sources have told AL-RA'Y that the Jordanian Government has not yet received any official nomination from Israel for its ambassador to Jordan.

The sources said that the normal procedure between countries when appointing ambassadors is to seek the other country's opinion on the nominated ambassador before that ambassador's official appointment to the other country. It is noteworthy that among the most prominent nominees for Israel's ambassador to Jordan so far are Avraham Halevi, deputy chief of the Israeli Mosad—who was nominated by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin; or Yosi Gal, a senior Israeli Foreign Ministry official and spokesman for the Israeli delegation to the peace negotiations—who was nominated by Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres.

It is also noteworthy that Jordan officially sought the Israeli Government's opinion on nominated Jordanian Ambassador Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir who was accepted.

Syrian-Israeli Talks Said Bound To End in Treaty

JN2512094294 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 25 Dec 94 p 1

[Editorial: "Washington Talks"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian-Israeli talks are now being conducted in the open, which is how intensive contacts between all the sides should be.

The Washington talks between Syria and Israel are bound to follow the example of those Israel had with the Jordanians and Palestinians and culminate in a peace treaty grounded in international legitimacy and recognizing the Syrian brothers' right to the return of their territory as mandated by UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The assessment that Syrian-Israeli negotiations will lead nowhere is unfounded. It is a virtual certainty that there will eventually be further Arab-Israeli peace treaties. What really matters in the final analysis is to establish a viable, fair, and comprehensive peace. They are at fault who argue that an Arab state is rendered weaker by another Arab state beating it to a peace treaty with Israel. Neither is it the case that those who led the way and made peace with Israel could have obtained a better deal had they waited for other tracks to move instead of acting independently.

Arab interlocutors with Israel had agreed among themselves that each party conduct itself in the negotiations so as to suit its own national interests and pursue an agreement as long as this did not prejudice the other Arab partners, which is what actually happened.

It is a plausible assumption that the Syrians and Israelis will work out a bilateral peace treaty, in which case the natural corollary will be one between Lebanon and Israel, thus ushering in a new era. Depending on the presence or absence of goodwill and an Israeli willingness to accommodate UN resolutions, the Middle East will either enjoy a comprehensive and sustainable peace or, alternatively, be in a state of shaky and brief truce that will soon unravel.

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Defense Minister on Israeli Attacks, U.S. Role

NC2812100094 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 28 Dec 94

[Telephone interview with Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul, in Beirut, by Fawzi al-Jundi, in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [al-Jundi] Do you believe the Israeli escalation of the situation in southern Lebanon is a purely military action, or does it have political objectives?

[Dallul] There is no doubt that Israel is carrying out a wide-scale aggression that has political objectives. Whenever political activity to rejuvenate the negotiations looms on the horizon, Israel heats up the situation in order to impose its conditions and to justify its stand that discussions should start with security issues. Therefore, Israel is attacking Lebanon's peaceful people; it is attacking women and children in order to achieve certain political objectives. However, these objectives do not serve the peace process but complicate it further.

[Al-Jundi] Frankly speaking, do you believe the Lebanese Army, with its current capabilities, can secure southern Lebanon?

[Dallul] On all occasions and in all venues and meetings, we have officially affirmed Lebanon's readiness to secure this area and to ensure that it will not become a launching pad for any operations against anyone or a passage for any gunman, except the legitimate Lebanese Army. The Lebanese Army can take full control of security in this area. We have affirmed this, and everybody knows it. However, they do not want to believe it, although they deeply realize this is the truth. They pretend the opposite because Israel, its supporters, and the lobbies that serve Israel in some states are the ones who have the final say.

[Al-Jundi] Can we say that Israeli attempts to stir up tension in southern Lebanon aim at putting pressure on the Lebanese negotiators to prolong the stay of the Israeli forces in southern Lebanon or to keep Israel from withdrawing completely from southern Lebanon and stay in the so-called border strip?

[Dallul] Everybody must know, and we want to tell the Arab and international public that we need a stance in support of justice, in support of us. Everybody must know that Israel will not feel secure as long it occupies one inch of Lebanese territory. In trying to continue its occupation of southern Lebanon and western al-Biqa', Israel is paying a high price on a daily basis. We have decided to stand fast, confront, and resist because our land is occupied. This is our right. It is the right of any people whose land is occupied to defend their land and to sacrifice their lives to liberate their land. This is Lebanese land. What is Israel doing there? If there are security reasons, we shoulder this responsibility. [passage omitted]

[Al-Jundi] Is Lebanon fully prepared to sign a peace agreement with Israel if it withdraws from Lebanese territory, regardless of whether a similar agreement is signed between Israel and Syria?

[Dallul] We believe it is imperative that the Lebanese and Syrian tracks should be parallel. In our view, separate solutions cannot survive and endure. It is in our interests, and it is our duty that we and the Syrian brothers be on one front with two parallel tracks. [passage omitted]

[Al-Jundi] Are you waiting for a settlement on the Syrian track to sign a peace agreement with Israel?

[Dallul] We and the Syrians have one stand and form one solid front. We and the Syrians agree on the principle of peace in exchange for land. We should not accept peace and lose land. This would be national deviation and treason.

[Al-Jundi] Are you pinning too much on the role of the United States in light of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's upcoming visit to the region?

[Dallul] We have repeatedly said that the United States can play a more effective role. The United States can put pressure on Israel to abandon its maneuvers and its attempts to impose its conditions and hegemony. Israel must agree to a very important principle—namely, peace in exchange for land. [passage omitted]

Fadlallah Views Joint U.S. Security Committee

NC2812184594 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] There have been different reactions to the formation of a Lebanese-U.S. security committee. While Washington has welcomed it, 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has voiced concern about it.

Ron Schlicher, the U.S. charge d'affaires in Beirut, has announced that the U.S. Government is very happy that a Lebanese delegation has been appointed to take part in the security dialogue between Lebanon and Washington. After Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz handed him a list of Lebanese delegation members, Schlicher said that the talks will be an opportunity to discuss several issues that have been unresolved for a long time. He added that the United States will have an opportunity to explain in detail its concerns about security in Lebanon. Lebanon, meanwhile, will have the chance to list its security achievements so far as well as future measures.

'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has expressed deep concern about the formation of this Lebanese-U.S. committee. He said: We believe that the committee will discuss the status of the Islamic Resistance. The United States always says that the stationing of this resistance at the battlefront against Israel poses a threat to U.S. citizens visiting Lebanon.

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Deputy Sami al-Khatib, chairman of the Chamber of Deputies' Defense Committee, announced that the task of the Lebanese-U.S. Security Committee has absolutely no connection with the Washington peace negotiations. He made this remark after contacting ministers Michel al-Murr, Muhsin Dallul, and Faris Buwayz.

Al-Khatib urged the three ministers to make sure that the Security Committee does not get involved in any military or security negotiations that exceed its mandate.

'Sources' on Attempt To Assassinate Fadlallah

NC2812111794 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1055 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Beirut, 28 Dec (MENA)—Lebanese political sources today disclosed that an attempt to assassinate Hizballah's spiritual guide Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has been aborted. The attempt took place some time ago and has not yet been announced.

The sources said that the security services discovered the attempt before it was implemented by a person who hails from the same village as Fadlallah. It is a border village in the Bint Jubayl district that is occupied by Israeli forces.

In statements to the Lebanese newspaper AL-SAFIR, the same sources accused Israeli intelligence of having trained the defendant on assassinating Fadlallah inside his house. The sources noted that other attempts have also been made to assassinate the most prominent religious Shiite figure from Hizballah leadership in Lebanon.

The sources said that they have information that confirms that there are several Israeli networks assigned to carry out a series of explosions in Lebanon and assassinations of Hizballah leaders and other men of religion. [passage omitted]

Chief Suspect in Beirut Bombing Said Mosad Agent

NC2812183394 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Lebanese Army has revealed the name of the chief suspect in the car bomb attack in Beirut's southern suburb, which killed three people and wounded 11 others on 21 December.

An Army Command security source remarked that uncovering the bombers' ring came as a result of cooperation between the Security and Reconnaissance Organ of the Syrian Arab Forces operating in Lebanon and the Lebanese Army's Intelligence Directorate.

The source said that the name of the chief suspect is Ahmad al-Hallaq and he is a Mosad agent.

The Army Command source added that in July 1993—on the instructions of General Dani, an Israeli intelligence officer stationed in Cyprus—Suhayl al-Humsi, a suspect currently in Lebanese custody and an agent working for this Israeli general, recruited the suspect, Ahmad 'Abd-al-Badi' al-Hallaq—currently a fugitive—to work for the Israeli intelligence services.

The Army source said that al-Hallaq arrived in Beirut from Israel one day before the Beirut bombing. He had orders to kill Fu'ad Mughanniyah, brother of 'Imad Mughanniyah, who is described as a most wanted individual in connection with the detention of Western hostages in Lebanon in the 1980's.

Al-Hallaq, accompanied by his wife Hanan and Wafiq Nasir, visited the site of the planned attack. They saw Fu'ad Mughanniyah sitting inside a car in front of his store. At that point, Wafiq urged al-Hallaq to carry out the bombing attack. Al-Hallaq pointed out, however, that his orders were to carry out the attack while Mughanniyah was sitting behind his desk inside the store to make sure that he would die in the blast.

The suspects then left the area and agreed to carry out the attack on the following day—that is, on 21 December.

PFLP, Fatah Clash in Palestinian Camps

NC2812192594 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] has issued a statement in Damascus saying that one of its members was killed and two others were injured when Fatah members opened fire on a PFLP office in 'Ayn al-Hulwah camp in Lebanon yesterday.

The PFLP added that a Fatah official in 'Ayn al-Hulwah handed over three of the attackers to the PFLP, while a fourth attacker fled. The PFLP explained that the Fatah official denied any connection with the crime.

The PFLP considers the attack a suspicious action that aims to inflame the situation in Lebanon's Palestinian camps as a service to Israel.

On 25 November there were armed clashes in 'Ayn al-Hulwah between rival Fatah groups comprised of supporters and opponents of the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements. Six people died and 13 others were wounded in those clashes. 'Ayn al-Hulwah is the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon.

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Diplomat Says Country Not To Succumb to Pressure

NC2312211194 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 20 Dec 94 p 15

["Exclusive" interview with Ahmad al-Hasan, ambassador to Iran, by unidentified correspondent in Tehran; date not given—first four paragraphs are JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a recent resolution, the UN General Assembly called for the unconditional withdrawal of the Zionist regime from the territories occupied after the Six-Day War in 1346 [year beginning 21 March 1967], including the Golan Heights. All the members present at the UN General Assembly session, with the exception of the United States and the Zionist regime, voted in favor of the resolution.

The U.S. representative in the UN General Assembly angered the Syrian Government so much that the Syrian Foreign Ministry summoned the U.S. ambassador in Damascus and protested against this hostile U.S. stance. The Syrian Government considers the U.S. vote against the UN General Assembly resolution an indication of the lack of sincerity on the part of the Americans regarding the follow-up of the peace trend in the Middle East.

In this regard, we spoke to Syrian Ambassador in Tehran Ahmad al- Hasan on the sidelines of the international conference on the Persian Gulf which is in progress at the Institute of Studies at the Iranian Foreign Ministry. We asked him his views on the aforementioned issue as well as other matters pertaining to the Middle East peace process. The following are excerpts of the interview for our readers.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Mr. Ambassador: Will the U.S. Government's negative vote on the resolution stressing the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Golan and the abrogation of the Zionist laws in that region reduce your government's trust in the White House's mediation with the Zionists on the peace process?

[Al-Hasan] Yes. This is natural. We will try our utmost to have the Americans remain mediators and not take sides. Unfortunately they are on Israel's side.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Will the U.S. policy bring about any changes in your government's stance on the peace process?

[Al-Hasan] No. We have our own distinctive logic and we will not change it under any circumstances whatsoever. We adhere to the same solutions propounded by the United Nations and its reliable resolutions. Our stance is legitimate and we will not change it until the UN regulations are implemented.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Neither the United States nor the United Nations have shown any interest in adhering to international norms and laws.

[Al-Hasan] This will bring the world to understand who is speaking legally and who is acting in an illegal manner.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] With such a stance, are you optimistic about peace in the future?

[Al-Hasan] I do not envision peace between Syria and Israel, at least not in the near future.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Why is that?

[Al-Hasan] Because three years have elapsed since the peace process was initiated and we are still at square one. There has not been the slightest progress for this peace trend to speak of. There do not seem to be any bright prospects regarding peace in the near future. The Lebanese are also in the same position and the same trench as us and even they have not made the slightest progress toward peace.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] You mentioned Lebanon's stance. The Israelis have asserted that as long as the Syrians do not withdraw their forces from Lebanon, they will not withdraw their forces from Lebanon either. Do you not believe that the Zionists' objective in spreading such propaganda is to portray Syria as the fomentor of the tensions in Lebanon and an obstacle to the peace process?

[Al-Hasan] Regardless of what their objective may be, the fact is that they are the usurpers and their presence in Lebanon is illegitimate and an act of aggression. We went to Lebanon at the invitation of the Lebanese Government and with the endorsement of the Arab League. Linking the two issues is the filthiest form of mischief-mongering. With such an attitude, there can be no peace.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] It appears from your remarks that you are not pleased with the trend of peace activities. Is this so?'

[Al-Hasan] Yes. This is because, as pioneers of this trend at this juncture, Jordan and the PLO have divided the Arab front against Israel. This discord has undermined the stance of each of the countries against the Zionists. This was the plan of the Zionists—to divide the countries in this manner.

[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Are you opposed to the PLO and Jordan making peace with Israel merely for this reason?

[Al-Hasan] No. There are other reasons as well. None of these accords guarantee the rights of the Palestinians. Peace without stressing the need for the withdrawal of the usurpist forces from the countries of the signatories is not peace. We know that the Jordanians have turned a blind eye to the entire West Bank of the Jordan River and have even placed their eastern shores at the disposal of the Zionists. Their peace is in fact a unilateral pandering to the wishes of Israel, not the attainment of reciprocal aspirations.

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[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] Do you not imagine that this peace tactic—in which one side is condemned to pay ransom and the other is merely extorting it—is the result of U.S. blackmail and pressure?

[Al-Hasan] Yes. Jordan and 'Arafat were under U.S. pressure, but we are determined not to succumb to these pressures.

AL-BA'TH, TISHRIN View Alexandria Summit

JN2912101694 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 29 Dec 94

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper AL-BA'TH writes on the Alexandria summit and its historic importance under the current circumstances in the Arab arena. It says: The convocation of this summit comes amid an extremely serious atmosphere and set of circumstances. Therefore, the mere convocation of the summit is significant and has exceptional importance that has drawn wide-scale interest on the Arab, regional, and international levels.

AL-BA'TH reviews the current Arab situation in light of the internal conflicts, differences, disputes, estrangement, absence of joint Arab action, and existence of certain sides' panting after the establishment of relations with Israel or calling for the establishment of a new Middle East at the expense of joint Arab action.

AL-BA'TH adds: We would not be exaggerating to describe the Alexandria summit as a ray of hope at a difficult and dark time for the Arabs. The one who called for the summit and those who responded to this call saw the summit as an ambitious attempt to reactivate Arab resolution and to begin by stopping the Arab deterioration and blocking the road before further any deterioration in the Arab situation.

Concluding, the paper says: Any Arab meeting, no matter how big or small it may be, which is based on the constants of the Arab stand, will be in favor of the Arabs and their higher pan-Arab interests and will check further deterioration. In light of this, we view the Alexandria summit as a new state of awakening and reactivation, and a strong call on this nation to reach a cohesive Arab stand that confronts future challenges strongly, faithfully, and resolutely.

in its commentary today, TISHRIN says: It is no longer a secret to anyone that the Arab situation has continued to exist—in terms of fragmentation, splits, and lack of coordination—and that this does not serve the nation's interests, but inflicts grave harm instead. Israel has exploited the fragmentation of Arab ranks to impose separate agreements and to divert the peace process from its objectives and bases.

The paper adds: It is natural for some Arab leaders to call for a meeting to discuss all developments in the region and the means of eradicating the deteriorating situation that is reflecting negatively on Arab rights. Syria has always been at the head of those who call for a comprehensive review of all developments. It has sought to achieve coordination among the Arab parties participating in the peace process. It has always put the Arab leaders in the picture of what is taking place, especially since the Arab-Israeli conflict is a pan-Arab conflict and ending this conflict requires a stand that is up to the level of its challenges in order to safeguard the nation's interests and future.

TISHRIN says: Based on this, President al-Asad has participated in the Alexandria meeting and has exerted persistent efforts to rehabilitate the Arab situation in order to achieve the aspired solidarity and to confirm the constants of the just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East crisis. The most important of these constants is Israel's full withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories based on UN Security Council Resolutions No. 242, 338, and 425.

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Afghanistan

Hekmatyar: Coalition Using Any Means To Retain Power

LD2812143994 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Message of Freedom Radio and Television held a meeting for the condemnation of the former Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan 15 years ago. A correspondent of the Message of Freedom Radio and TV reported to us from the hall where the meeting was held that the meeting, which started with the recitation of some Koranic verses by Qari Akefi at 1000 hours yesterday morning, was attended by some officials of Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan [Islamic Party of Afghanistan], the ulema, jihadi commanders, and members of the High Coordination Council.

In his valuable and scholarly speech to this meeting, brother Hekmatyar, leader of Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan and leader of the Alliance, condemned the 15th anniversary of the invasion of Afghanistan by the Red Army of the former Soviet Union. Brother Hekmatyar explained in his speech the stages and dimensions of the Russian interference, military invasion, and influence.

In his speech, he said: We have promised the government regarding the establishment of a real Islamic government in Afghanistan. God willing, we will remain loyal to our promises until the establishment of a really Islamic government in Afghanistan and will not leave our compatriots alone in the enemies's quagmire of conspiracies and plots.

Touching on the deeds of the coalition administration officials in his speech, brother Hekmatyar said: The leaders of the coalition use the Supervisory Council to continue their limited rule. Brother Hekmatyar added: I am fully confident that the coalition does not refrain from any [word indistinct] ruse and trick that will lead to the continuation of their power. [passage omitted]

Rocket Launcher Destroyed in 'Heavy Explosion'

LD2812154994 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] A (?BM rocket launcher) set of the Moscow-Paris hireling coalition was destroyed. Quoting a source close to the hireling coalition, city correspondent of RPA [Radio Paygham-e Azadi] reported that a heavy explosion occurred at 1800, 3d Jadi [24 December], in the 315th Unit of the warmongers of Moscow-Paris hireling coalition in Naway Prozha area in Khayrkhana district [Kabul], as a result of which a [word indistinct] of the hireling coalition was destroyed. The report adds: On top of the material loss, an officer of the unit by the name of Major Mohammad Asef, who is a known communist, was seriously injured.

Jet Shot Down by HCC Air Defenses in Shindand

LD2812150594 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] A jet of the Kabul hireling coalition administration was shot down. In a radio contact from Shindand District, a responsible source of the High Coordination Council [HCC] reported to Radio Message of Freedom that a jet of the Kabul hireling coalition administration, which had flown from Shindand Airport in the afternoon of 26 December to bombard the positions of the HCC, was hit by the air defenses of the HCC in the Zirkoh area of the aforementioned district, during the course of a bombardment. The airplane crashed in the Zirkoh area, and its pilot was killed. The report adds that no loss of life and material has been suffered by the HCC forces as a result of the bombardment.

HCC Forces Reportedly Repulse Attack

LD2812160594 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] An unsuccessful attack by the hireling coalition administration was dislodged. A city correspondent of RPA [Radio Paygham-e Azadi] reports:

While our people were busy condemning the invasion of the Russian arrogance, warmongers of the Moscow-Paris hireling coalition administration launched, at 0500 yesterday morning, a broad offensive in the area of Khoshal High School [southwest of Kabul; Chehelsotun area] where it faced a shameful defeat as a result of the invincible [words indistinct] of the High Coordination Council [HCC] forces. As a result of the defeat, the warmongers of the hireling coalition left one Stalin organ [a rocket launcher] in the battlefield.

The report adds: While in a statement the night before last, the Kabul hireling coalition announced, through its liar radio, a unilateral cease-fire to distort public opinion, yesterday morning it launched an unsuccessful attack on the HCC trenches. [words indistinct]

Bangladesh

Opposition MP's Submit Resignations From Parliament

BNP Says Situation 'Unfortunate'

BK2912045294 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0130 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The opposition MP's belonging to Awami League, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-i-Islami, and

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NDP [National Democratic Party] have submitted their resignation from the Parliament. Receiving the letters last night, Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali said he was scrutinizing the resignation letters. Earlier, the Awami League, the Jatiya Party, and the Jamaat-i-Islami held separate rallies in the city.

Explaining the situation, BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] Secretary General and LGRD [Local government and Rural Development] and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar described the resignation of the opposition members from the Parliament as unfortunate for the nation. Addressing a press conference in Dhaka last night, Mr. Talukdar said the government tried its best to prevent the opposition members from resigning from the Parliament. Narrating the long proceedings of negotiations between the opposition and the government leaders at various levels, the BNP secretary general referred to the latest BNP proposals under which the prime minister and her cabinet shall resign, set a date before the date of elections at the end of the five year term, provided the opposition MP's call off their strike and suspend all programs like hartals [strikes] and sit-in's. BNP made these proposals beyond the constitutional provision for the greater interest of the nation and democracy. He regretted that in spite of the compromise proposals by the government, the opposition members resigned. He pointed out that the opposition had waged their struggle in the name of free and fair elections was unfair [sentence as heard]. They do not want free and fair elections rather they only want to disturb democracy and disrupt economic development of the people. Barrister Salam Talukdar said opposition activities, including resignations from the Parliament, had exposed their designs to make the Parliament ineffective, undo the democratic process, and disturb the socioeconomic development of the country. Replying to a question, Mr. Salam Talukdar said the government will take all steps to ensure the safety of the life and properties of the people. He told another questioner no administrative and legal crisis would be created after the resignation of the opposition MP's. He said the government will continue its activities and take steps as per the constitution and law of the land. Referring to certain (?laws) that have been passed in the Parliament, he said it was aimed at strengthening the election commission and introduction of identity cards so that future national polls could be free and fairer.

Among others, Deputy Leader of the House Professor Badruddoza Chowdhury, Education Minister Zamiruddin Sirkar, Energy Minister Dr. Mosharraf Hussain, Communications Minister Oli Ahmed, Housing and Public Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mian, and State Minister for Social Welfare Fazlur Rahman, were also present on the occasion.

Jatiya Party MP Major General Retired Mahmudul Hassan formally joined the Bangladesh Nationalist Party—BNP yesterday. Mr. Hassan met the BNP chairperson, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Ziaur Rahman, at her office yesterday evening and expressed his solidarity with the ideals and programs of BNP and extended his total support to her leadership.

Major Cities Hit by General Strike

BK2912052294 Hong Kong AFP in English 0507 GMT 29 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, Dec 29 (AFP)—Bangladesh was gripped Thursday [29 December] by a nationwide general strike called by opposition parties less than 24 hours after their members resigned from parliament.

Several home-made bombs went off in Dhaka as the strike took hold at 6:00 a.m. (2400 GMT) but no major incidents were immediately reported.

The eight-hour nationwide stoppage Thursday will be followed by a three-day strike from January 2 confined to the capital Dhaka as the opposition presses ahead with its campaign to topple Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and her Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) government.

The opposition wants fresh general elections held under a caretaker neutral government, a demand rejected by the premier as unconstitutional.

Police and para-military troops were out in force as activists from the main opposition Awami League, the Jatiya Party (JP) and the Muslim fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party marched along main thoroughfares of the capital.

Except for three-wheeler pedicabs, all other vehicles were off the streets, and shops, schools and businesses were shut. Inter-district communication, including rail services, were disrupted.

News reports said the strike was also being observed in the major cities of Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi.

On Wednesday all but four of the 147 opposition legislators resigned from parliament after last minute talks failed to break the political deadlock which has plagued Bangladesh for more than nine months.

Abdus Salam Talukder, secretary-general of the ruling party, told reporters the opposition resignation was "regrettable and a sad event for the nation, despite our efforts."

The 330-member parliament was elected in 1991 in Bangladesh's first free elections since independence in 1971.

Meanwhile, retired army general Mahmudul Hasan, a Jatiya Party member and former home minister under deposed president Hussain Muhammad Ershad, joined the ranks of the ruling party.

Newspapers said that he could lose his seat in parliament because under Bangladesh's constitution an MP cannot quit his party and join another, unless two parties merge.

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India

Indigenous Nuclear Submarine Program Examined

BK2712160894 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 22 Dec 94 p 6

[Article by Rita Manchanda: "Extravagance at Sea"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Officially, India's 24 year old indigenous nuclear submarine project is rarely acknowledged. At Vishakapatnam, the huge shed which houses a part of the project, is readily pointed out by naval sources. But for the record, the Advanced Technology Vehicle (ATV) project, as it is euphemistically named, does not exist. Asked about the progress of the ATV, then Vice Admiral B Guha, Vishakapatnam C-in-C [commander in chief] replies—"as regards our future programme towards nuclear submarine propulsion, this has got to be a national political decision."

That "national political decision" had certainly been taken in 1984, according to the memoirs of the former President, R Venkataraman. In his My Presidential Years, he claims that when he was Defence Minister he floated the idea of acquiring a nuclear submarine. Alongside, a second nuclear propelled submarine was to be built in India. "The IAEA [Indian Atomic Energy Authority] and its chief Dr Raja Ramanna were confident of providing an atomic power pack for the submarine." Venkataraman wrote.

Former IAEA chairman M R Srinivasan in a recent article in THE HINDU confirmed that a joint team of the Bhaba Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and the Indian Navy have been working for many years on the nuclear submarine power unit. "As of now a land-based prototype testing facility for the submarine reactor has been completed", writes the former IAEA Chief. Drawing upon a review of the project done five year ago when he was chairman, Sirnivasan added, the review "concluded that work on the reactor was in fact proceeding faster than the work on the boat itself."

That was five years ago. The return of the Soviet-leased INS [Indian Naval Ship] Chakra nuclear submarine in January 1991 with no follow up plans was seen as marking a definite pause, if not an end to the ATV project which was meant to ride piggy back both on the Soviet Charlie class submarine design and the crew training. This was despite the fact that the curtailing of the blue-water ambitions of a carrier based Indian Navy should have seen greater emphasis on the development of the submarine arm—both diesel and nuclear propulsion. But with successive defence budget squeezes, the programme was said to be in doldrums.

In a sense that ATV was paying the price of being kept invisible, that is in contrast to other indigenous programmes of the Defence Reserach and Development Organisation (DRDO) like the LCA [Light Combat Aircraft]. As the SIPRI [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute] yearbook 1994 cautioned, it was difficult to assure "sustained commitment for a project with so small an internal constituency and little institutional support or public visibility".

Politically, it made sense to veil a project which skated that thin edge of the wedge between nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and for the defence sector. Nuclear propulsion was one thing, nuclear weapons quite another. Except for the Soviets leasing India the INS Chakra, no country had transferred to a non-nuclear weapon state a nuclear propelled submarine. And according to R Venkataraman, it was decided to take the Chakra on lease because purchase would have entailed accepting NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty] conditions. Even so, it came with a Soviet crew. While the design technology for the boat was shared, it stopped at the atomic reactor unit. That would have to be indigenously developed. And the joint team has been working on a hush-hush nuclear propulsion since the early 70s.

The official silence on the project is being broken by no other than the former chiefs of the atomic energy establishment. In the last couple of years they have emerged as a vocal lobby pushing for a more vigorous nuclear profile for India and that includes a nuclear weapons policy.

The immediate provocation for Mr Srinivasan's disclosures on "the nuclear submarine project" is the former Navy capt B K Subbarao's latest diatribe against the atomic energy establishment which sent him to jail for 20 months. Leaving aside the pettiness betrayed in the attack by Capt Subbarao and the defence by Mr Srinivasan, the articles throw much needed light on a shadowy defence project in which crores have been sunk. A senior naval source is quoted as estimating that the ATV project costs Rs [rupees] 30 crore per annum.

Capt Subbarao was among the naval engineers and scientists handpicked to work with BARC in 1970 in eight groups to come forward with a workable nuclear propulsion model. His team's concept was among the three cast aside. Not only was Capt Subbarao adamant that his model would have worked but he insisted that computer analysis of the three approved designs showed that they would not work. His persistence led to some eight reviews of a model which, it was argued, was the result of teamwork. More important it would have given away Indian interest and progress in nuclear propulsion systems design.

Capt Subbarao quit the navy and completed his Ph.D at IIT [Indian Institute of Technology] Bombay on the computer modelling of the dynamic behaviours of a submarine nuclear reactor. It meant matching the atomic power unit with the boat design along the lines of the French tear-shaped hull. The navy delayed permission for publication of his thesis. Meanwhile, Subbarao had not given up his crusade against the atomic energy establishment for spiking his reactor model and wrote about it in the Telegu papers. Furious, the atomic energy bosses put the IB [Intelligence Bureau] on his tail. At the

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airport he was arrested on grounds of violating the Official Secrets Act. He was taking away with him his thesis and research documents some of them drawn form the BARC library and touching upon his earlier work on the reactor model. He was acquitted by the Bombay court in 1991. It was perhaps not coincidental that by then technical journals had published the failure of the French trials of the model proposed by the Subbarao team at BARC.

That the BARC-Navy project did suffer from poor leadership was evident when Indira Gandhi shifted it to Delhi to be centralised under Admiral M N Roy with the DRDO as the project manager. It was in 1984 that the ATV project was launched to match a hull of Soviet design with a reactor of Indian design.

Mr Srinivasan confirms that enriched uranium required for the first core and subsequent replacement is being produced in a special facility. Work on control systems and reactor components has been taken up.

But the target of the year 2000 for India's first indigenous nuclear submarine is farfetched, unless the programme is made visible. But visibility will make possible for the first time a public debate on why should India go in for a nuclear submarine.

Defense Ministry Evaluates Bids for 155mm Gun Order

BK2712160594 Delhi THE ECONOMIC TIMES in English 23 Dec 94 p 24

[Report by Rahul Bedi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi 22 December—The Ministry of Defence [MoD] has begun evaluating bids submitted by five of 12 armament manufacturers from around the world for "substantial numbers" of 155 mm Self Propelled (SP) guns. The bids include a transfer of technology.

Sources say paper evaluation of technical bids from Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd (VSEL) of UK, Giat of France, LIW of S Africa, Martin of Slovakia and HSW of Poland working in tandem with AB Bofors of Sweden is expected to be followed by a series of extended trials, starting March 1995. Rheinmetall of Germany, Samsung of S Korea, United Defense of the US, Soltam of Israel, OTO Melara of Italy and Omnipol Foreign Trade Corp of the former Czech Republic also sent requests.

Military sources say deadline for trials is unrealistic and will be delayed and, in all probability, will not be completed before 1997/98.

While the RFP [request for purchase] was for an unspecified number of 155mm SP artillery systems, India is expected to make an outright purchase of around 110/120 systems in completed, semi knocked-down and completely knocked down forms.

The remaining 450/500 155mm SP, mounted on the T-72 tank chassis, expected to make up the Army's projected inventory of around 600 weapon systems, will be indigenously built. The cost for the entire project, staggered over a decade, is upwards of Rs [rupees] 60 billion ($2 billion), say MoD sources.

While India wants 155mm/39 calibre ordinance mounted on a T-72 tank chassis, the RFP also indicated a preference for 155mm/52 calibre ordinance. The RFP, however, did not include ammunition.

Meanwhile, the leasing of around 120 152mm 2S19 guns from Russia for at least three years for around Rs 6 billion is imminent. Of this, around Rs 4 billion for spares and ammunition is nonrefundable, say military sources.

Iran

Rafsanjani Favors 'Active' Relations in Gulf

LD2812162094 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani received Iran's new ambassador [not further identified] to Bahrain today on the eve of the envoy's departure for Bahrain.

The president emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran's policy is to establish active and friendly relations with all of the countries of the Persian Gulf littoral. He also noted that there is a need for all of the countries in the region to cooperate to establish security and stability in the Persian Gulf region.

Regime Said Working 'To Provoke' Bahraini Shiites

NC2812100194 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1630 GMT 27 Dec 94

[Commentary: "Further Tension in the Relations Between the Clerical Regime and Bahrain"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The provocations by the clergymen ruling our homeland emerges each time in one form and in one corner of the world or another, giving rise to protests against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The clerical regime's relations with the Persian Gulf's southern littoral states have not yet been fully normalized following an era of coldness. Thus, a voice of protest was heard from a small Gulf country like Bahrain, forcing it to recall its ambassador from Tehran in a show of protest.

Observers believe that the reason Bahrain has recalled its ambassador from Tehran is in protest to the policies, stands, and propaganda that the clerical regime has been exercising in an unfriendly manner against Bahrain. The Bahraini Government believes that the clerical regime's propaganda machinery is falsely publishing extensive

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rumors on the situation in Bahrain, sometimes making accusations against the Bahraini Government. This cannot be easily tolerated by the Bahraini Government. Moreover, the Bahraini Government is also aware of the fact that the clerical regime is doing its best to provoke the Bahraini Shiites and thus upset the situation in that country and cause more problems for it.

In addition, differences of views can be seen in the policies of the two countries on various regional issues. All of these have made the Bahraini Government more suspicious toward the clerical regime, especially when in the past the Bahraini Government had learned from experience how the clerical regime was resorting to different means to overthrow the Bahraini rule.

These provocations and interventions in domestic affairs prevent other countries from associating with the clerical regime with peace of mind and also prevents the establishment of healthy relations. Although Bahrain's expression of dissatisfaction over the clerical regime's policies and plottings is nothing new, it is a sign of tension in relations between the two countries and also a sign that relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Persian Gulf's southern littoral states are growing colder.

Rabin Visit to Muscat Said 'Detrimental' to Region

LD2812205594 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1900 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In an interview with the Central News Unit today, a Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed concern over the continuation of bloodshed in Chechnya and said: We call for an end to the massacre of the defenseless people of Chechnya because we believe that the continuation of hostilities serve the interests of none of the two sides.

The spokesman referred to a recent decision made by the parliament of the Jerusalem occupying regime on the prohibition of political activities of the PLO in Jerusalem and said: The Zionist regime's allies had promised the PLO an independent self-rule government; but within a short period of time, the only outcome of that agreement has been that the Zionist regime has controlled, supervised, and steered the PLO.

He referred to the recent visit of Yitzhaq Rabin to Muscat and said: We see any kind of preparation of ground for the overt or covert presence of the Jerusalem occupying regime in Islamic countries—whether political, economic, or cultural—as detrimental to the unity of the Muslim nations and the region's peace and stability. Allowing occupiers to get a foothold in the region not only paves the way for the Zionist regime to come out of isolation, it also prepares the ground for the creation of discord and infiltration into the ranks of Muslims.

IRNA Questions France-Algeria Hijacking Situation

LD2812212094 Tehran IRNA in English 1937 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 28, IRNA—On the eve of the new Christian year, the hijacking of the Air France Airbus by a group of armed men, has attracted the world's news media's attention to the hijacking affair for four days.

Since the cancellation of Algeria's free elections and landslide victory of Islamic parties and suppression of Muslims which was carried out with the support of the Western states, bloody clashes in the country has claimed lives of thousands of Muslims.

According to the dispatches, at least 10 thousands were killed and dlrs. 2 billion of damage was inflicted during the bloody clashes from February 1992 to December 1994.

Western media attributed the hijacking of the French airliner to Algerian Muslim groups, however many ambiguties hang over the hijacking.

Right before the takeoff a group of armed men entered the plane under the pretext of checking. Then the media declared that the armed men, whose [number] was reported to be between four and six, were members of an Armed Islamic Group, one of the Islamic groups which opposes the Algerian Government.

It was claimed that the hijackers demanded the release of Abbas Madani and Ali Belhaj, two leaders of the Islamic Salvation Front, and termination of French political, military and economic aid to Algeria.

Moreover based on some reports the group on Monday [26 December] in a statement accepting the responsibility for the hijacking strressed that the move was in reprisal for French military, political and economic assistance to Algeria.

Meanwhile the Islamic Salvation Front in a statement in Bonn condemning the hijacking said the incident is a clear approval of the defeat of the policy of suppression. [Words indistinct] of an Algerian security officer, a Vietnamese attache and chef of the French Embassy in Algiers, suddenly it was announced that the French authorities in a contact with Algerian officials have requested them to allow the plane to take off for France. The question which is yet to be answered is how the hijackers accepted this demand. Another question is that at the time the hijackers demanded to fly to Paris, why the plane landed in Marseille. According to a press analyst, "Apparently hijackers had planned to hold a press conference in Paris in return for release of the hostages. However in light of the prevailing atmosphere France had no inclination to make a deal with the hijackers and therefore the fuel provided was only sufficient to take the plane to Marseille, the most southern point in France."

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While in Marseille Airport the French special units, which previously in 1979 had carried out the suppression operation of Muslim activists in Saudi Arabia, embarked on their work and inspected the situation, under the cloak of airport crew.

Finally after intensive negotiation with French officials and end of the deadline which had been determined by hijackers for receiving fuel to fly to Paris, some 70 men of French special unit started the operation.

After a 15-minute clash which led to the killing of all the hijackers and wounding of 16 passengers and crew and 9 members of special forces, the hijacking affairs concluded.

Many experts maintain that the operation was very weak as such operations should last more less [as received] than 15 minutes.

Secondly, despite the use of modern weapons the operation not only led to killing of all hijackers but also left 16 passengers injured.

Political observers hold the view that the French Governement politically was in need of a success in anti-terrorism campaign.

French political analysts confirm that Prime Minister Edouard Balladur was in need of power show-off as he is to be a candidate in the next electiions.

He is well-known even among his party that he always prefers to escape while facing big problems.

Political observers maintain that this will help him and will upgrade his status in relation to his rivals for presidential elections.

Furthermore, the head of the parliamentary board of Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) abroad, Anwar Houdam expressed suspicion that the hijackers were FIS members and doubted whether the hijacking was done by an Islamic group. He said that the ploy was devised by the secret service of Algerian Government taken place to discredit the cause of Algerian people and to isolate the FIS political activities.

According to the observers, the scenario has a great deal of ambiguities. An outstanding question lies in the possibility of an access on the part of the hijackers to the airplane of France at Houari Boumedienne Airport which is under special protection due to the current developments in Algeria.

It is hardly believable that different kinds of arms especially 20 pieces of dynamite and an AK-47 had been carried into the plane with no special measures or prearrangement.

All the ambiguities speak of the real nature of the semi-police action which may remain in a state of secrecy.

IRNA: Moscow Denies Entry to 21 Citizens

LD2912082394 Tehran IRNA in English 2133 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Moscow, Dec. 28, IRNA—Immigration officials at the airport here Tuesday [27 December] rejected entry to a group of 21 Iranians who had just stepped out from an Iran Air plane and sent them back to Tehran on the same flight.

They were part of a group of 35 Iranians, all of them with genuine Russian visas issued to them in Tehran. They were interrogated for 3.5 hours at the airport.

Immigration officials said they had denied entry to the group since there were discrepancies between what they declared was the reason for their visit to Moscow and the kind of visas they had on their passports.

The Iranian ambassador reached by IRNA here Wednesday confirmed the report saying he had requested satisfactory explanation by the Russian Government officials. He said the issue was being investigated with due concern.

Agreement Reached With Germany on Debt Rescheduling

LD2412163694 Tehran IRNA in English 1618 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec 24 IRNA—The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and the Union of German Industries have reached an agreement on rescheduling Iran's one billion mark debts to 750 German companies, an informed source at the Central Bank said Saturday [24 December].

The source said the companies which could not enjoy guarantees of Germany's state insurance company, Hermes, in their transactions with Iran, were divided into three categories:

"The first group contains those companies to whom Iran owes less than one million marks. under the new agreement, Iran will repay its debts to this group within a six month period beginning December 15, 1994 [date as received].

"The second group includes those German companies to whom Iran owes between one and 10 million marks. 10 percent of outstanding debts to those companies will be repaid soon after the agreement is finalized and the rest will be paid back in 16 instalments every three months as of December 15, 1994.

"The third group consists of companies to whom Iran owes more than 10 million marks. Under the agreement between the Central Bank of Iran and the Union of German Industries, Iran's debts to those companies will be repaid in at most 14 instalments every three months beginning the first half of 1996.

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The German Chamber of Commerce and Industries based in Cologne confirmed the conclusion of the agreement between the Iranian Central Bank and the Union of German Industries. It said out of 900 German creditor companies 750 have announced their approval of debt services contained in the agreement.

Under the agreement, the Iranian side has undertaken to pay a seven percent interest on its arrears, in 10 instalments. he said.

Purchase of 2 French Airbuses Reported

LD2812212994 Tehran IRNA in English 2117 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 28, IRNA—The first of two French-made Airbuses bought by the airline of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran Air) landed at Tehran Mehrabad Airport today.

Iran's Minister of Roads and Transportation, Akbar Torkan told reporters at the airport here today that the two Airbuses are not part of an expansion program of the airline's planes which, he said, was to be effected later on during the Second National Development Plan.

Managing Director of Iran Air, Hassan Shafti said in the same interview that order for purchasing the two planes had been placed with their French manufacturer when there were economic sanctions against the Islamic of Iran [as received] due to which, he said, delivery of the said planes had been held up.

Shafti said there is a project to gradually replace the remaining planes of Iran Air with Airbuses.

In terms of fuel consumption, Airbuses are very economical and ideal also for long distance flights. Because of their passenger capacity, too, they are also economcally ideal for flying between short points.

One feature of the Airbuses purchased by Iran Air is their special compass for indicating the direction of the qibla for those who wish to say their in-flight prayers.

There are 265 seats in the cabin of the Airbus 22 of them Homa-class [as received].

Thus far as many as 195 of such planes have been purchased by Germany, Singapore, China, South Korea, Japan, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Greece, and the United States.

Agreement Reached With Azerbaijan on Drivers Visas

LD2812141694 Tehran IRNA in English 1233 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 28, IRNA—Iran and Azerbaijan have agreed to remove visa requirements for drivers of trucks carrying transit goods via the territories of both countries.

The agreement, to go into effect on January 10, was inked by Mohammad Reisi, director general in charge of consular affairs at the Iranian Foreign Ministry and his Azeri counterpart Saber Aqa Beylov [names and titles as received].

Under the agreement, drivers of the two countries can stay in Iran and Azerbaijan for 15 days without having to apply for visa. Currently, the Russian-Azerbaijan border is closed because of the ongoing war in Chechnya.

IRIB To Broadcast TV, Radio Programs Overseas

LD2712141494 Tehran IRNA in English 1350 GMT 27 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 27. IRNA—The Islamic Republic of Iran's Broadcasting (IRIB) is to broadcast TV and radio programs through satellite for its neighboring countries in a near future.

The IRIB's deputy chief for overseas programs, Mohammad Sarfaraz, told a press conference Monday [26 December] that the organization's satellite programs were aimed at introducing the holy Islamic culture and the achievements of Islamic Iran as well as establishing contacts among Muslim nations.

He cited the reflection of the news of the Muslim world and liberation movements, confrontation with the penetration of the fop-Islamic [as received] [words indistinct] of Islam and disclosure of facts about the U.S. and Zionism as other aims of the new satellite programs.

According to the official, IRIB's overseas branch broadcast two tv programs in Arabic and Azeri and 17 radio programs in English, German, French, Spanish, Turkish, Russian, Kazakh, Armenian, Bosnian, Urdu, Pashto and Kurdish languages daily.

Sarfaraz further said that three new radio programs in Swahili, and Malawian languages would be put on air as well.

New Regulations To Encourage Direct Imports

LD2712133994 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 27 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] New legal facilities have been introduced in the free trade zone of Qeshm to encourage importers to obtain goods directly from the country of origin.

Following the approval of legal requirements relating to import/export regulations and customs affairs in free trade zones, from now on, importers who wish to purchase and take goods to the free trade zone of Qeshm, may purchase their goods directly from the country of origin and indicate the Qeshm free trade zone as the final destination in the relevant documents, instead of purchasing the goods from middle men. Importers can then

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take their goods by ship to the customs offices of the ports in Hormozgan province.

Immediately, and without the need to off-load the goods in the ports—or, should they so wish, after off-loading in those ports—they can then use the new legal facilities to transfer the goods with the vessels of their choice to the free trade zone of Qeshm.

The free trade zone of Qeshm has also announced that from now on, if their goods cannot be cleared from customs for whatever reason—apart from banned goods—or if they have decided they do not wish to clear customs and bring their goods into the country after all, the owners of goods brought into the country's customs offices may choose to submit a request to return the goods to the free trade zone of Qeshm and clear customs there using that zone's legal facilities.

Mines Discovered in West Azarbaijan Province

LD2612184294 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] A gold mine and a platinum mine have been discovered in the northern parts of the West Azarbaijan Province. According to the West Azarbaijan Province's Mines and Metals Ministry director general, with the discovery these two mines, the exploitation of which is to begin next year, the province will be transferred to a national center for extraction of gold.

He added: The gold mine is in Siyah-Cheshmeh, around Maku township, while the platinum mine is located in Khoy township.

Preliminary investigations show that the said mines possess large reserves of high carat metals.

He added: In the course of exploration carried out within the framework of the first development plan, the country's largest mercury mine has also been identified in Siayh-Cheshmeh. Detailed exploratory work, which is aimed completing the investigations, is currently being carried out on this mine.

Rafsanjani Calls For More Educational Centers

LD2612141694 Tehran IRNA in English 1354 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA—President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said here Monday [26 December] that establishment of educational centers should gain momentum in view of the growth in number of young people eligible to go to school.

The president, speaking to Education Minister Mohammad 'Ali Najafi and a number of benevolent persons involved in building schools, expressed hope that there would be no shortage of educational centers by the end of the second economic development plan in 1999.

In view of the establishment of schools in the deprived regions of the country and the warm welcome accorded to such schools by girls living in those areas during the post revolution era, the number of students has risen from 7.5 million to 18.5 million.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Rafsanjani also appealed to benevolent people throughout the country to dedicate plots of land to the Education Ministry or build schools for it.

Helping the young generation augment their knowledge is an Islamic, humane and national move which will not only promote science but will also have constructive results for generous and benevolent people.

Government May Change Policy on Accepting Refugees

LD2812164494 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran may review its policies regarding acceptance of refugees in view of the conduct of international organizations and Western countries.

Today, Mr. Hoseini, the Interior Ministry's director general for foreign nationals and refugees, addressing a gathering of officials in charge of Tehran province's offices for affairs of foreign nationals, said: Some Western countries have received up to $1 billion for accepting a few refugees, but Iran, as a country that has accepted the highest number of refugees and homeless in the world, has only received $150 million during the last 15 years.

The Interior Ministry's director general for foreign nationals and refugees stressed: That issue will force the Islamic Republic of Iran to introduce some limits on the acceptance of foreign refugees.

Agriculture Minister Discusses Food Supply Issue

LD2612130594 Tehran IRNA in English 1038 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA—Some annual dlrs. 800 million have been allocated to essential goods during the Second Five-Year Plan, in order to maintain food security, announced Minister of Agriculture, 'Isa Kalantari, at a seminar, on Food Security Day, the fourth day of the week of agriculture, here Sunday [25 December].

He said with regard to the investments made for food production, some 86: [as received] of foodstuff supply is being provided through domestic productions.

Kalantari added, "Fortunately, the production trend will be stepped up by current investments, such as the dams under construction, which will be completed by the end

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of the Second Five-Year Plan. The projects will save 20 billion cubic meters of unutilized water to irrigate more agricultural land".

Low efficiency in certain fields is the significant problem of Iran, he said adding, in order to increase efficiency and to improve the methods of irrigation, the government will pay rils. 400 billion to farmers to encourage them to produce more food and save water."

"During the first Five-Year Plan," said Kalantari, "the money spent for water has never been less than 110 percent of the money allocated, whereas the money spent on the other sections has been less than 80 percent of what was allocated."

"There is no food security in a country where the people receive less than 80 percent of the necessary calories and protein," he said adding "in order to maintain food security, fortunately, the government has allocated substantial food subsidies."

According to investments made during the First Five-Year Plan, the self-sufficiency indicator for protein and calorie intake will increase from 75 percent to 86 percent by the end of the Second Five-Year Plan, representing a 2.2 percent annual increase in nutrition self-sufficiency," he added.

Referring to the high wastage of agriculture produce in Iran, Kalantari said that an average of 35: [as received] of farm products is now being wasted and this is what would be enough for 15 to 20 millions of people in Iran.

He concluded by asking the executive policy makers in the country to render assistance to his ministry in preparing a comprehensive national program to safeguard food security in the country.

Weather Destroys Citrus Crops in Kerman Province

LD2612184594 Tehran IRNA in English 1737 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jiroft, Kerman Prov., Dec. 26, IRNA—Unseasonal freezing cold inflicted rls. 52.93 billion worth in damages on regional farmers, an informed official at local agricultural organization Khodadad Marani announced here Monday [26 December].

Marani said minus six degrees celsius cold damaged 600 hectares of lemons and 1,000 hectares of citrus sapplings over the past couple of weeks, inflicting rls. 1.6 billion in damages. Moreover, added Marani, over 900 hectares of patches and farmlands as well as 200 hectares of maze growing lands sustained rls. 330 million in damages as a result of the freezing cold.

Marani said 3,000 hectares of orange, 500 hectares of tangerine, 1,000 hectares of lemon and 500 hectares of what is known in Iran as limou shirin (sweet lemon) orchards suffered rls. 23 billion in damages as a result of the extreme cold.

Religious Minorities Said To Live in 'Perfect Peace'

LD2612220294 Tehran IRNA in English 2128 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 27 [date as received], IRNA—For centuries religious minorities have lived in perfect peace with Muslims in Iran. Since the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in Iran they have had a better peace of mind as the result of their leaving within the Iranian society.

All religious minorities in Iran have the right to practice according to the dictates of their faith.

For the time being there are 176 churches in Iran, 21 synagogues, 36 temples for followers of various faiths in the country.

Followers of religions practice their own religious rites without the least restricitons and such places of worship are even visited non-Iranian followers of the same faiths who visit Iran periodically.

According to Article 13 of the Constitution of the islamic Republic, Zoroastrian Iranians, Jewish Iranians, and Christian Iranians are the recognized religious minorities in Iran.

Article 14 of Iran's constitution says the Iranian Government as well as the Muslim people of Iran are obliged to have good behaviour with non-Muslims and deal with them consistent with the Islamic equity.

Non-Muslim Iranians enjoy all conceivable cultural rights. Constitutionally they are entitled to have their own papers. Armenian Iranians also publish their own calendars with information about special aspects of their religion. After it is issued in Iran every year, it is subseuently distributed among Armenians in other parts of the world.

Religious minorities in Iran also enjoy full liberty to worship and in addition have their own clubs in which they engage in their own cultural and social activities. This is evidence that the religious minorities in Iran enjoy full cultural freedom.

Religious minorities also have a strong presence on radio, television, cinema, the media, sports and business in Iran.

The Armenians have their own athletic events and festivals.

The presence of a number of Armenian athletes in the national sports teams of Iran and their active presence in the field is an indication of their full involvement in those areas.

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They also enjoy full liberties in connection with matters of civil and personal status including marriage, divorce, succession, employment and residence.

They also show a strong presence on the political arena, and in the elections, at which they demonstrate their role in determining the fate of the nation in collaboration with their Muslim fellow-countrymen.

The Iranian Constitution allows Armenians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Jews and Zoroastrians to have their own representatives at the Majles, the state's legislative council.

Pakistan

President, Jamaat Leader Discuss Anti-U.S Protest

BK2912090894 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 29 Dec 94 p 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec 28—In a bid to dissuade the Jamaat-i-Islami [JI] from arranging the protest demonstrations in protest against the forthcoming visit of the US delegation in the first week of January, President Farooq Ahmad Leghari held a meeting with the Jamaat leader Senator Prof Khurshid Ahmad at Aiwan-e-Sadr [presidential palace] here on Wednesday [28 December].

Highly placed sources confided to THE MUSLIM that during the hour-long meeting President Farooq Ahmad Leghari reportedly assured the JI leader that Pakistan government had no intention of signing the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) unilaterally and the doubts of JI leaders in this regard were incorrect.

Sources said the President urged Senator Khurshid to persuade the high command of his party to abandon plans to take our a [as published] procession to protest the arrival of US delegation on Jan 6, 1995.

Earlier, Khurshid Ahmad held an important meeting with JI Chief Qazi Hussain Ahmad in Lahore on Tuesday. Qazi Sahib had specially flown from Faisalabad to Lahore to meet Prof Khurshid.

Former Secretaries Foreign Affairs Agha Shahi and Abdul Sattar also held meeting with Qazi Hussain Ahmad.

Maleeha Lodhi, Pakistan Ambassador to the US, also called on the president today. The President discussed with the ambassador Pak-US relations, particularly with reference to the country's nuclear policy and Kashmir issue.

Ministry Denies Nationals Involved in Chechen

BK2812133694 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has strongly denied that Pakistanis are taking part in the fighting in Chechnya and has expressed surprise and dismay at this unsubstantiated statement with regard to alleged involvement of Pakistanis in the conflict in Chechnya. According to a clarification issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad today, the Russian prime minister, Mr. Chernomyrdin, is reported to have said that fighting in Chechnya was being done mostly not by Chechens but by foreign mercenaries. Pakistan is concerned on the continuing bloodshed and loss of life in Chechnya, especially among the civilian population, and at the destruction caused by this conflict. Pakistan has welcomed the announcement made by President Yeltsin that he has ordered a halt to air raids that could cause civilian casualties and that the road to peaceful talks remained open.

Government Said To Increase Oil, Gas Storage

BK2812121794 Islamabad THE NATION in English 28 Dec 94 pp 3, 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad—Federal Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources Anwar Saifullah Khan that the government is making post haste efforts to increase storage of oil and natural gas to decrease dependence on foreign inputs during peak energy demand periods.

He was addressing the participants of the 14th specialised course at Foreign Services Academy here on Tuesday [27 December]. The six month course is being attended by thirteen Pakistan's and nine participants from six other countries.

He informed that at present oil storage can sustain Pakistan requirements for between 7 to 15 days and this is probably the most vulnerable weak spot in the oil sector of Pakistan. The job of oil storage is being carried out by Pakistan State Oil.

To increase oil storage from 7-15 days to 45 days, two private companies Caltex and Shell are being involved in this sector by the government. These companies are offered 25 percent rate of return on capital investment.

This is further being augmented by possible storage of natural gas during excess production period in the summer in either salt domes of deleted gas fields. To a question, he said that Pakistan is expected to achieve self-reliance in gas production but not before sometime during the next century.

He informed that the work on the laying of gas pipeline from Qatar to near Turbat (Pakistan) via Dubai and Iran is progressing in a satisfactory way. While talks on similar projects are going on with Iran and Turkmenistan.

Giving the presentation on petroleum policy. Federal Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources said that the government of Pakistan's objective with respect to the petroleum sector is to adopt policies which attract

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the private sector into investing in infrastructure development. Oil exploration and oil storage.

Besides this power and coal are other sectors which are open for foreign investment. He informed that by the year 2000, a huge amount of about 28.1 billion dollars is expected to be invested in the sectors of power, oil and gas and coal. The break up is 13.4 billion dollars in power sector 12.6 dollars in oil gas sector while 2.1 billion dollars in coal sector.

He disclosed that the ground breaking ceremony of Multah Oil Refinery after its expansion will be performed by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. The oil refinery which will be reactivated was established in collaboration with Abu Dhabi.

Talking about oil exploration, he informed that besides Oil Gas Development Corporation 17 private companies are involved in this sector, six companies are about to start their work while four companies are carrying out study in this regard. These companies hail from Canada, United States and European countries.

Referring to petroleum policy 1994 he said the policy sets out a vision of sustained and hampered economic growth in the country with a much greater dependence on market forces while steamlining the institutional and regulatory frameworks in the sectors.

He said the task force on energy sector formulated policies which covered the induction of the private sector into electricity generation. A plan to completely revamp the distribution and transmission of electricity's enhancing the pace of oil and gas exploration and production and most importantly giving due importance to refining, transportation and marketing of petroleum products. [sentence as published]

He maintained that the government has no intentions of totally privatising Oil and Gas Developing Corporation [OGDC] The government will keep 25 percent shares of OGDC while operational field will be handed over to private sector from Pakistan and outside the country.

Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali who was also present on the occasion said that developing countries need to re-adjust their economic and administrative structure to bridge gap in the field of Finance and Economy.

MQM-Haqiqi Team Submits Memorandum to Bhutto

BK2812162194 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1300 GMT 28 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] A three-member delegation of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement [MQM]-Haqiqi faction led by Chairman Afaq Ahmad called on the prime minister in Karachi this afternoon. Benazir Bhutto stressed the need to establish peace in Karachi. She said that political groups should isolate terrorists and help the government normalize the situation.

The MQM-Haqiqi delegation presented a memorandum to the prime minister. Among other things, the memorandum calls for measures to impart a sense of participation at every level to the citizens of Sindh. It demands strict implementation of the 40:60 proportion prescribed in the Linguistic Bill for recruitment in all provincial departments. It proposes the redemarcation of Malir District and the creation of a new district consisting of Orangi Town. It also contains some additional suggestions.

The prime minister assured the delegation that the suggestions made in the memorandum will be given due consideration.

Bhutto Speaks With MQM-Altaf Group

BK2912033194 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 29 Nov 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said talks with all political forces, including the Mohajir Qaumi Movement [MQM], will continue to seek to improve the situation in Karachi. Speaking to a delegation of the MQM-Altaf group in Karachi yesterday evening, she said that at this juncture of the current political situation, the government does not want to accuse anyone, and the important thing is to resolve the issue. The MQM delegation presented various problems and grievances.

In a briefing to reporters, the senior minister of Sindh, Syed Parvez Ali Shah, said the meeting, which lasted for two hours, reviewed the law and order situation in Karachi and the continuing dialogue between the MQM and the provincial government. The 10 points presented by the MQM were also discussed, and it was decided to continue the dialogue this evening. In response to a question, Syed Parvez Ali Shah expressed the hope that the dialogue with the MQM and the prime minister's meeting with various delegations will yield good results. He said, god willing, the government and the MQM will make concerted efforts for restoring peace in Sindh, particularly in Karachi.

The MQM delegation, which was led by Shoaib Bukhari, included Arif Siddiqi, Qazi Khalid Ali, and Tariq Javed. The prime minister was assisted by Sindh Governor Mahmud A. Haroon; Chief Minister Syed Abdullah Shah; Defense Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani; and the senior minister of Sindh, Syed Parvez Ali Shah.

Hekmatyar Asks 3 Nations To Close Afghan Missions

BK2712130394 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 27 Dec 94 p 12

[Report by Mohammad Ali Imran]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar, Dec 26: Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan [HIA] (Hekmkatyar) has reportedly requested governments of Pakistan, Iran and Saudi

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Arabia to ask the Afghan consulate and embassies in their regions to wind up their offices as their existence, up to large extent, was providing legal shelter to the otherwise "illegal and unconstitutional government in Afghanistan".

According to Afghan sources, the HIA was also seriously considering to take into confidence the rest of the world community where the Afghan consulates and embassies were functioning. With the fast approaching Dec 28, the date fixed by the Supreme Court of the war ravaged country for President Rabbani to step down from the office, Hekmatyar and his allies were endeavouring to mould international opinion in their favour in general and the said [as published] three Islamic countries in particular that really mattered in fitting the political and constitutional vacuum in Kabul.

The Hezb-e Eslami sources confirming the report said that the party command had so far contacted the three governments which HIA termed are must for sorting out some possible solution of the Afghan crisis. The request had been made at a time when Pakistan was already endeavouring to restore peace in the war-shattered Afghanistan by holding secret meetings with major Afghan groups.

Disclosing details of the meeting between Hekmatyar and former ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence] Chief Gen (Retd) Hameed Gul held at Cherasiyab, a week back, Hezb sources claimed that the latter informed the HIA chief that Rabbani had agreed to the proposals presented by HIA for restoring normalcy in Kabul. Besides other demands Rabbani has expressed willingness to disarmament of the forces fighting and making Kabul and other parts of Afghanistan arms-free areas, interim set-up and holding of free and fair elections in the country within six months.

The Jamiat-e Eslami sources were, however, not available to confirm the reported changing stance of Rabbani under which he has accepted the Hezb's proposals in his meeting with the former ISI chief.

The HIA sources maintained that the assurance given by the former ISI chief, if true, could achieve a major breakthrough in so far as the Afghan problem was concerned. They however, warned that if Rabbani again betrayed them by prolonging his stay in power, there will be total bloodshed in Kabul, as we are not ready to see the most disliked personality in government any longer".

According to Afghan sources though President Rabbani was currently consulting his aids in connection with the latest peace move by Pakistan and now to tackle the situation he was confronted with just before the expiry of his tenure, there was a possibility that he would refuse to quit the presidency. In that case, the situation would further get aggravated and in all probability, could compel the rival groups to carry out a full-fledged attack on Kabul. Informed sources said that Rabbani was also under immense pressure from India that was in no mood to help the Afghans resolve their differences and move towards a lasting peace in the war-torn country.

The Hezb-e Eslami sources, too, claimed that India, which had become hectic in Afghan affairs for the last several months, was trying to keep the Afghan groups away from the negotiation table as it feared that the formation of an Islamic and elected government other than that of Rabbani could bring an end to its involvement and the growing influence on Afghan said.

So far as the UN and the OIC [Islamic Conference Organization] peace efforts and the role being played by Pakistan, Iran and other Islamic countries was concerned, the HIA expressed its satisfaction and hoped that if Rabbani and his allies positively responded to peace talks, peace would become the destiny of the Afghan people.

Sri Lanka

Government To Review VOA Relay Station Agreement

BK2412111794 Hong Kong AFP in English 0846 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, Dec 24 (AFP)—Sri Lanka is to review an agreement it signed with the United States for a Voice of America (VOA) relay station, following protests backed by the Catholic church, officials said Saturday [December 24].

A cabinet sub-committee appointed by the People's Alliance government has decided that the VOA agreement should be "reviewed comprehensively" in the light of concerns expressed by religious and social groups, officials said.

Church leaders have backed the campaign opposing the relay station in the northwestern coastal village of Iranawila. Approval for the station was given by the former United National Party administration.

Those opposing the relay station want the agreement renegotiated. They contend the existing provisions would deprive fishermen of their livelihood and would damage local culture and the environment.

The area's predominantly Roman Catholic inhabitants have joined religious leaders and social organisations in protests against the pact. At least one civilian died when police fired on anti-VOA demonstrators.

LTTE Kills Government Soldiers in Landmine Attack

'At Least Five' Killed

BK2412110994 Hong Kong AFP in English 1053 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, Dec 24 (AFP)—Tamil separatist guerrillas Saturday [24 December] blew

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up a bus carrying government troops in eastern Sri Lanka, killing at least five soldiers and wounding 20 others, military sources said.

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels set off a landmine under the bus in Vakarai in Batticaloa district in the worst attack since the LTTE scaled down strikes after President Chandrika Kumaratunga came to power last month.

The latest attack came as the government awaited a response from the LTTE for a "reciprocal cessation of hostilities" before the resumption of a second round of peace talks next week.

No details were immediately available on the bus blast but military sources said that soldiers had launched a major search for LTTE guerrillas following the attack.

This was the worst attack on security forces since Kumaratunga became president in a landslide victory at the November 9 presidential polls.

Kumaratunga initiated the peace negotiations with the LTTE shortly after leading her People's Alliance to victory at the August parliamentary elections.

The rebels responded by declaring a seven-day unofficial ceasefire to mark Kumaratunga's inauguration as president but in recent weeks have stepped up attacks on security forces in the embattled northeast.

The military has claimed virtual control of the sprawling eastern province after ridding the region of LTTE guerrillas two years ago.

However, the militants have been harrassing small groups of troops by operating from jungle hideouts in the area.

The LTTE is fighting for a separate state in the northeast for Sri Lanka's two million minority Tamils concentrated in the region. Thousands have died in the LTTE-led independence struggle.

Security Forces Kill 2 'Terrorists'

BK2512130094 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 1128 GMT 25 Dec 94

["Pool item"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, 25 Dec: Seven soldiers were killed Saturday [24 December] in a land mine explosion in Eastern Sri Lanka while at least two terrorists were shot dead by troops in the Northern Province. A military spokesman told LANKAPUVATH that three soldiers were killed on the spot near the 56th mile post on the Vakarai-Valachchenai road in the Batticaloa District around 1235 hours yesterday when terrorists activated a land mine, in which 27 others including two civilians were also wounded. Four other soldiers later died. The two terrorists were confirmed killed when a security forces search and clear operation party retaliated a terrorist attack at 1730 hours at Vettilaikerni in the Northern Kilinochchi District on the same day. The troops later recovered two terrorist bodies along with some food items, three shorts, one oil bottle, and three identification tags.

LTTE Suffers 'Heavy Casualties' in Attack on Camp

BK2912102694 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0544 GMT 29 Dec 94

["Pool Item"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, 29 Dec (LANKAPUVATH)—The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] was reported to have suffered heavy casualties in an abortive attempt to overrun the security forces camp at Thumpanaveli in the eastern Batticaloa District, midnight Wednesday [28 December].

Security sources told LANKAPUVATH that government troops had recovered the bodies of 11 terrorists killed in the fierce 20 minute gun battle.

They had also captured 14 terrorists weapons. Seven soldiers received minor injuries and three weapons were taken by the terrorists.

Security sources said that a group of about 100 terrorists had come from the Thoppigala jungles and attacked the Thumpanaveli security forces camp, located 4 kilometres from Chenkaladi on the Chenkaladi-Mahaoya Road.

Government To Visit Jaffna To Resume Peace Talks

BK2512114294 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has made arrangements to send a delegation again to Jaffna on the 29th December to resume peace talks with the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]. The delegation will also include a retired senior military officer. They will discuss mainly the modalities to work out the cessation of hostilities to be effective from the beginning of the new year. The talks will also focus on rehabilitation and reconstruction of the North and the opening of a roadway to the peninsula.

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